

The College at Brockport: State University of New York Digital Commons @Brockport

Counselor Education Master's Theses

Counselor Education

Fall 2011

Urban High School Climate: Students' Perceptions of Bullying and Homophobic Remarks in School

Joseph Navarra

The College at Brockport, jnaval@brockport.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/edc_theses



Part of the [Student Counseling and Personnel Services Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Navarra, Joseph, "Urban High School Climate: Students' Perceptions of Bullying and Homophobic Remarks in School" (2011).
Counselor Education Master's Theses. 117.

http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/edc_theses/117

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Counselor Education at Digital Commons @Brockport. It has been accepted for inclusion in Counselor Education Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @Brockport. For more information, please contact kmyers@brockport.edu.

Urban High School Climate:
Students' Perceptions of Bullying and Homophobic Remarks in School
Joseph Navarra
The College at Brockport: State University of New York

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page.....	1
Table of Contents	2-3
Author Note.....	4
Acknowledgements	5-6
Abstract	7
List of Figures	8
Literature Review	9-29
Bullying and Homophobic Remarks in Schools	9
Bullying and Homophobia	10
Homophobic Bullying in Schools	12
Harassment in Schools	13
Implications of a Negative School Climate	15
Physical Consequences	16
School Violence	16
Emotional Consequences.....	17
Suicidal Ideation and Suicide of Lgbt Students	17
Behavioral Consequences.....	20
Absenteeism and Academics	20
Resiliency and Protective Factors.....	22
Risk Factors	22
Grade Level.....	23
Ethnicity.....	23
Religious Orientation	23
Low Academic Achievement.....	24
Internalizing Symptoms	24
Alcohol and Drug Use.....	24
Homophily and Peer Norms	25

School Climate	25
Teacher Attitudes and Classroom Characteristics	26
Perceptions of School Safety	26
Effects of Homophobic Remarks	27
Methods	30
Participants	30
Procedures	31
Instrument	32
Reliability	33
Results	34
Analysis	34
Individual Survey	34-45
Interpretation	45
Comparative Analysis	46
Drawbacks	47
Discussion and Implications	48
Strategies and Interventions	48
Recommendations	51
Conclusion	53
References	57-66
Appendix	67-77

Author Note

Joseph Navarra, Department of Counselor Education, The College at Brockport:

State University of New York

Correspondence concerning this thesis paper should be addressed to Joseph Navarra,

Department of Counselor Education, The College at Brockport:

State University of New York 350 New Campus Drive, Brockport, NY 14420

E-mail: jnavai@brockport.edu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the direction and the support of several individuals who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study.

First and foremost, my utmost gratitude to the faculty of the Counselor Education Department at Brockport whose sincerity, care and encouragement I will never forget.

Dr. Kathleen M. "Kitty" Fallon, for her unselfish and unfailing support in challenging and motivating me through personal and academic rigors;

Dr. Summer Reiner, who had kind concern and consideration regarding my academic progress and development;

Dr. Patricia Goodspeed-Grant, whose guidance allowed me to discover and look deep into my inner self and understand what role that played in life's pursuits;

Dr. Robert Dobmeier, for his patience and steadfast encouragement in research class and offering his time above and beyond his obligations;

Dr. Thomas Hernandez, for his insights and organization of my course schedule in this process;

Professor Amy Gaesser, for her support and encouragement when taking my first graduate level course;

Anne Nenni, Department Secretary, for her organization and tireless efforts in graciously assisting me with all of my questions during this process;

To my wife, family and friends who endured this process with me. Without their support and understanding this would have not been possible;

Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to my coworkers, who have supported me in all respects during the completion of the project.

I am heartily thankful to everyone, whose encouragement, guidance and support from the initial to the final level enabled me to achieve this goal.

Abstract

Implications of bullying and homophobic remarks heard in school can be harmful to students and create an unsafe school environment. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth are often targets of negative and derogatory comments (GLSEN, 2009). This paper defines homophobic bullying, specifically in school settings, and addresses key issues. Several issues researched in this paper include; the implications of harassment, absenteeism, academics, and the roles of personal characteristics of students who heard homophobic remarks in schools. The research addresses the significance of students who report victimization of negative and harmful remarks. Resiliency and risk factors of students are essential issues addressed in an effort to understand the overall effects of homophobic bullying and negative remarks heard in schools. Finally, the paper addresses the importance of continued proactive efforts to reduce and eliminate bullying and homophobia in schools.

Key Terms: Homophobia, Homophobic Bullying, LGBT, GLSEN, Risk Factors & School Climate

List of Figures

Figure 1: Cronbach's Alpha Case Summary Log.....	33
Figure 2: Safe Space Logo.....	44
Figure 3: Hypothesis Model	55

Bullying and Homophobic Remarks in Schools

Inequalities, social exclusion and discrimination negatively impact the health, well-being and achievement of children and young people (Social Exclusive Unit, 2011). Clear links have been identified between children's and young people's experiences of education and schooling, and their achievements, socio-economic position and health as adults (Acheson, 1998).

Homophobic harassment and bullying are two behaviors that can negatively affect students' experiences (GLSEN, 2009). During the last two decades, there has been an increasing awareness of the need to address bullying among young people in and out of school settings (Acheson, 1998). In addition, in recent years there has been growing concern about the impact of homophobia and homophobic bullying on children's and young people's physical and emotional well-being and on their attendance and achievement at school (Rivers, 2000). Schools today are not only facing the challenge of recognizing bullying, but also what efforts can be taken to reduce bullying incidents. Hostile acts are often perpetrated against racial and ethnic minorities, gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual youth, and persons with disabilities (American Psychological Association, 2005). Bullying targeted toward gay, lesbian and questioning youth can have adverse effects to a student's social emotional growth (GLSEN, 2009). In response to widespread professional and public concern about the harmful effects of bullying in schools, many school systems have adopted measures to educate and prevent bullying among students. Recent activities to protect children and adolescents from bullying have been undertaken by both schools and national policies. The objectives of these programs are to provide a safe environment while at the same time enriching the children's emotional, physical and educational welfare. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and the "That's So Gay" national advertising campaign, in conjunction with recent studies are two programs that can promote awareness of

homophobic bullying. Two major studies reviewed in this paper are the 2009 Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network study and the 2006 Safe Schools of North Carolina study. The paper covers homophobic bullying and harassment in schools, the physical, emotional and behavioral effects of hearing homophobic remarks in schools and school climate.

Bullying and Homophobia

Bullying is a common and evident problem in schools. To begin to understand the effects of homophobic remarks heard in schools, and specifically homophobic bullying, bullying and homophobia must be defined. In an effort to build a safe school environment, bullying and homophobic remarks of youth who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning, must be eliminated.

A bullying researcher, Dan Olweus, stated “A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending him or herself (p.9).” In accordance with his definition, Olweus believed that bullying is: (a) an aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions; (b) a pattern of behavior repeated over time; and (c) an imbalance of power or strength (Olweus, 2010). Coloroso (2003) defined bullying as “a conscious, deliberate hostile activity intended to terrorize and harm others through the threat of further aggression” (p. 13). The aggression can manifest itself in many forms, primarily: physically, verbally and socially. There are nine key forms of bullying: (1) social exclusion or isolation; (2) physical (such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting); (3) lies and false rumors; (4) having money or other things taken or damaged; (5) being threatened or being forced to do things; (6) racial; (7) sexual; (8) cyber (via cell phone or Internet), and (9) verbal, including derogatory comments and bad names (Olweus).

Farrington (1993) described bullying as “repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful one” (p. 381).

In an effort to define homophobia, Mihalik believed that understanding the definition of heterosexism, in comparison to homophobia, was necessary. He defined homophobia as any belief system that supports negative myths and stereotypes about homosexual people, or any of the varieties of negative attitudes that arise from fear or dislike of homosexuality (1991).

Homophobia is an irrational fear of, or aversion to, homosexuals and homosexuality. People who have homophobic attitudes react to homosexuals as enemies to be feared, hated, and actively repressed (Mihalik). He described heterosexism as a belief system that values heterosexuality as superior to, and/or more natural than, homosexuality. Others defined homophobia as any negative attitudes toward homosexuality existing on a continuum, from homophobia to heterosexism (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997).

Heterosexism does not acknowledge the existence of non-heterosexuals (Mihalik). People with heterosexist beliefs react to homosexuals as unfortunate, devalued individuals (Mihalik). Mihalik described homophobia as being a suppressed and feared ideology where the positive valence of “us” and the negative valence of “they” has been the basis for stigmatizing someone with homosexual beliefs, as a person to be feared and hated (1991). The philosophy behind homophobia can manifest itself in two relevant modes; internal and external. Internal homophobia is a learned bias that individuals, including LGBT, incorporate or internalize into their belief system (Community University Institute for Social Research, 2003). External homophobia is an overtly observed or experienced expression of internal biases, such as social avoidance, verbal abuse, and civil discrimination (Community University Institute for Social Research). Elements of internal and external homophobia, such as internalizing verbal abuse and

social avoidance, show a relationship to institutional and cultural homophobia. Institutional homophobia, or heterosexism, refers to the many ways that governments, businesses, churches, educational institutions, and other organizations and institutions discriminate against people on the basis of sexual orientation (Community University Institute for Social Research). Cultural homophobia refers to social standards and norms that dictate that being heterosexual is better or more moral than being GLB, and that everyone is (or should be) heterosexual (Community University Institute for Social Research). The negative outcomes of students' experiences of institutional or cultural discrimination often make it difficult for students to self-advocate (Community University Institute for Social Research).

A study conducted by the University of London's Thomas Corwin Research Unit emphasized that homophobic bullying can take a number of forms: name calling or verbal threats, forms of sexual harassment (such as being inappropriately touched), being continually ignored (due to one's perceived sexuality) and physical violence – sometimes slight, and on other occasions, extreme (D'Augelli & Rivers, 2001, Kimmel & Mahler, 2003, Kosciw, 2004, & Rivers & Ryan, 2003). Homophobic and other negative remarks, coupled with the repetition of those remarks, can be harmful to students. The term "homophobia" was first defined by Weinberg (1972) to mean "irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of homosexual men and women" (Cogan & Erickson, 1999). Fyfe (1983) defined homophobia as "any negatives attitudes and reactions toward homosexuals" (p. 549). The harassment suffered as a result of bullying can create difficulties for adolescents' emotional and social states of being.

Homophobic bullying in schools.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) youth often experience bullying and harassment in the school environment. Evidence suggests that students who either identify as or

are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) experience a negative school climate such as bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, teasing (D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002; Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008). A national study of school climates indicated that 91.5% of LGBT youth reported hearing homophobic remarks in their school frequently or often (Kosciw et al., 2004). In a later study, Kosciw et al. (2008) surveyed over 6,000 self-identified LGBT youth ages 13-21 and found: (a) almost three-fourths of youth heard homophobic remarks often or frequently at school; (b) close to 90% of youth reported experiencing verbal harassment at school because of their sexual identity; and (c) nearly half of the youth experienced physical harassment because of their sexual orientation.

In a study conducted by the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN, 2009) of 7,261 students, between the ages of 13 and 21, from all 50 states, 61.0% identified as gay or lesbian. GLSEN's survey examined the experiences of LGBT students and identified negative indicators of school climate. Several indicators of negative school climate included: (a) hearing biased remarks, including homophobic remarks; (b) feeling unsafe in school because of personal characteristics, such as sexual orientation, gender expression or race/ethnicity; (c) missing classes or days of school because of safety reasons; and (d) harassment and assault in school (GLSEN). GLSEN's report was significant, not only due to the large number and variety of students surveyed, but the inclusion of transgender youth. GLSEN's report substantiated Kosciw's finding that nearly 90% of LGBT students surveyed experienced harassment at school. An analysis of National School Climate Survey data over 10 years showed that, since 1999, there has been a decreasing trend in the frequency of students' experiences with more severe forms of bullying, but harassment has remained relatively constant (GLSEN). Even though it appears that homophobic bullying has declined, the impact of its effect is more severe than ever (GLSEN).

Verbal and physical harassment, hearing homophobic remarks, feeling unsafe, academic difficulty, and social emotional issues are indicators of a hostile school climate as experienced by students (GLSEN).

Harassment in schools.

There were several other key findings in GLSEN's 2009 national survey. Harassment of same-sex-attracted young people can contribute, among other things, to lack of sleep, loss of appetite, isolation, nervousness, being upset or angry, elevated rates of actual and attempted suicide and self-harm, absenteeism, truancy and limited achievement at school (GLSEN, 2009). According to a the 2009 GLSEN study, 84.6% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 40.1% reported being physically harassed, and 18.8% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation. Three forms of physical assault included: punching, kicking, and the use of weapons (GLSEN). Of the students surveyed, 63.7% of LGBT reported being verbally harassed, 27.2% reported being physically harassed and 12.5% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their gender expression (GLSEN). It is important to note that the survey tracked only those that actually reported harassment in schools. The survey indicated that 62.4% of students who were harassed or assaulted in school did not report the incident to school staff, believing little to no action would be taken or the situation could become worse if reported (GLSEN). The 33.8% of the students who did report an incident said that school staff did nothing in response (GLSEN). In a study conducted by Safe Schools of North Carolina (SSNC, 2006), a statewide organizational program committed to end bullying and harassment in schools, found that for every LGBT youth who reported being harassed at school, four heterosexual youth reported harassment or violence for being perceived as gay or lesbian (as cited in Reis, 1996). The

harassment experienced by youths who identify as LGBT can have a negative impact on their social and emotional development (SSNC). The mental health of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth has been found to be compromised by victimization, including assault and harassment, of these youth (Morrow, 1991). Victimization of students can manifest into serious violent implications including shootings at school.

Implications of a Negative School Climate

A negative school climate related to LGBT bullying has been linked to poor attendance (Rivers, 2000), lower academic achievement (Murdock & Bolch, 2005), increased substance use (Faulkner & Cranston, 1998; Garofalo et al.; Marshal et al., 2008; Rivers & Noret, 2008), and increased mental health difficulties (D'Augelli et al., 2002; Friedman, Koeske, Silvestre, Korr, & Sites, 2006; Rivers & Noret, 2008) among youth who identify as LGBT. Harassment of same-sex attracted young people can contribute, among other things, to lack of sleep, loss of appetite, isolation, nervousness, being upset or angry, elevated rates of actual and attempted suicide and self-harm, absenteeism, truancy and limited achievement at school (Fineran, 2002, Rivers & D'Augelli, 2001, Rivers, 2001, & Ryan & Rivers, 2003). In a study of the long-term correlation of bullying, 53% of adult lesbians and gay men reported contemplating harming themselves as a result of being bullied at school, and 40% indicated they had attempted to harm themselves or had attempted suicide on at least one occasion (Rivers, 2001). Research has shown that increased levels of victimization are also related to increased levels of depression and anxiety and decreased levels of self-esteem (Rivers). In a study conducted by Rivers (1996), respondents reported their clothes being "set alight, having chemicals thrown on them during science lessons, being urinated upon, burned with cigarettes while being held down, being dragged around a school playing field by the hair, and being raped" (p.18).

According to GLSEN's study (2009), as victimization increases, reports of depression, anxiety and poor self esteem increase. Additionally, Murdock and Bolch's (2005) analysis of 101 LGBT, high school-aged youth suggested that those youth who reported both a negative school climate and being victimized demonstrated lower levels of achievement. These findings were consistent with other surveys and research studies supporting the relationship of increased victimization with lower emotional functioning (D'Augelli et al., 2002; Friedman et al, 2006) and/or academic functioning (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005).

Physical Consequences

School violence.

It is evident that governing bodies, administrators and teachers have connected bullying with the rise of school shootings and other violence in schools. Of the 95 school shootings since 1966, the National Threat Assessment Center (2002) found that attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, or had been previously attacked. Approximately 15% of students are subject to bullying on a daily basis (Olweus, 1998). Olweus further reports 35 to 40% of victims are bullied primarily by a single student. According to Hawk (2009), bullying is a prime factor in two-thirds of school shooting incidents. Vossekuil (2002) noted that in more than half of the shootings, revenge was the motivating factor for retaliation.

Revenge, specifically due to homophobic bullying, was a motivating factor for Charles Andrew Williams, a 15-year-old student who killed two classmates and wounded 13 others in March of 2001 (Aitkin, 2001). According to Scarpaci's (2006) research, Williams was tormented and bullied. Reports stated that he was burned with cigarette lighters and called derogatory names, including homophobic remarks (Aitkin, 2001). It is evident that LGBT

students who experience negative and harassing behaviors experience not only physical difficulties, but from emotional difficulties as well.

Emotional Consequences

Suicidal ideation and suicide of lgbt students.

Self-esteem, depression, anxiety, as a result of victimization of bullying or hearing homophobic remarks, can lead to serious mental health issues like suicide (Kim & Leventhal, 2008). Due to the unsafe environments reported, students may have a difficult time achieving academic and social success. In addition, to poor academic achievement, poor attendance (Murdock & Bolch, 2005) and increased substance use (Faulkner & Cranston, 1998; Garofalo et al.; Marshal et al., 2008; Rivers & Noret, 2008) have been linked to elevated rates of attempted suicide and self-harm (Fineran, 2002, Rivers & D'Augelli, 2001, Rivers, 2001, & Ryan & Rivers, 2003). The widespread negative behavior in schools not only affects the secondary or high school population, but the middle and elementary levels as well. The suicide rate for LGBT students continues to be 3-4 times higher than that of their straight counterparts (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010).

The relationship between suicide risk and sexual orientation has been researched for over three decades, but has become prevalent in the last 15 years. According to Kim and Leventhal (2008), in a 2007 adolescent study conducted in the United States, 19% of high school students had serious suicidal ideation, 15% made a specific plan to attempt suicide, 8.8% reported suicidal attempts, and 2.6% made a suicide attempt that was serious enough to require significant medical attention. Similarly, a 2001 Korean study found that the rate of completed suicides for adolescents (from 11 to 19 years) was 15.5 per 100,000, making suicide the third leading cause of death, after car accidents and cancer (Kim & Leventhal). For children at greater risk for

suicide, perceived peer rejection, being bullied, and being perpetrators of bullying were associated, directly and indirectly, with major depression, substance use, and antisocial behavior with severe suicidal ideation (Kim & Leventhal).

The Department of Pediatrics, at the University of Minnesota, surveyed 394 youth who described themselves as bisexual or homosexual and 336 youth who describe themselves as heterosexual (Blum, French, Remafedi, Resnick, & Story, 1998). Both sets of students' outcomes were measured in three categories: suicide ideation, intent, and self reported attempts. Suicide attempts were reported by 24% of bisexual student compared to 8% of heterosexual students (Blum, et al., 1998). Understanding the relationship between sexual orientation and suicide risk might illuminate the epidemiological trends in self-inflicted injury and death, contribute to recognition of vulnerable youth, and lead to preventive interventions (Blum). Preventing or reducing hearing homophobic remarks in schools, by any intervention, can be a contributing factor in reducing stress. As a result of experiencing stress, gay youths may be at a particularly high risk for suicide. According to Gibson's (1989) review, lesbian and gay males are far more likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual peers, with these youths comprising as many as 30% of all completed youth suicides. In a later study by D'Augellie and Hershberger (1993), 42% of LGBT adolescents reported a past suicide attempt in the previous year.

A meta-analysis of 13 youth-suicide research studies, between 1972 and 2000, found that between 30% and 42% of LGBT youth attempted suicide (Community University Institute for Social Research, 2003). The results of GLSEN's 2009 study fall within the range of findings of the meta-analysis, reporting an approximate attempted suicide rate of 30% of LGBT youth. Jay Paul, a researcher with the University of California's Center for AIDS Prevention Studies found suicide to be a risk factor for LGBT in a hostile environment (Paul et al, 2002). In another study,

Remafedi (1999a) reviewed six controlled, population-based surveys in the United States and Canada and found that in all six, attempted suicide rates were higher in LGBT youth compared to their heterosexual peers. In 2008, the Child Death Review Unit of the British Columbia Coroner's Service conducted a review of youth deaths from 1997 to 2003 (Child Death Review Unit, 2008). The study identified 81 youth who died by suicide. Wells (2009) identified those at increased risk for suicide included "sexual minority, older youth (ages 17-18), male youth, and youth questioning their sexuality" (p. 5). Wells' report highlighted that the majority of youth who committed suicide experienced "an acute stressful life event twenty-four hours prior to their death; almost half had a history of mental health problems, with depressive symptoms the most frequently reported" (p. 5). Nearly half of these youth also experienced chronic dysfunction, including neglect and abuse, in their relationships with family members or romantic partners (Wells, 2009).

In 2009, news reports documenting these events included extensive interviews attesting to the trauma experienced by Massachusetts African American student Carl Walker-Hoover and Latino student Jaheem Herrera of Georgia (Biegel & Kuehl). They were each subjected to relentless name-calling and bullying by schoolmates who perceived them to be gay (Biegel & Kuehl). In 2010, 13-year-old Seth Walsh, from Tehachapi, California committed suicide by hanging after bullied for years because he was gay. Asher Brown, 13 from Houston, Texas, shot himself as a result of homophobic bullying. Also in 2010, in Greensburg, Indiana, 15 year old Billy Lucas hung him from constantly hearing homophobic remarks and homophobic bullying in school. These are only a few of the recent suicides that plague gay teenagers in the United States. In an effort to reduce and prevent circumstances that can lead to teen suicides, programs and interventions are available that can help improve school safety. Studies of suicide risk factors for

LGBT youth have been conducted on a world wide scale. Reports by GLSEN (2009), the CUISR (2006), Kim & Leventhal (2008), the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota (1989), and the University of California's Center for AIDS Prevention (2002) all identify suicide is a prevalent risk factor for LGBT youth.

Behavioral Consequences

Absenteeism and academics.

Many LGBT students miss classes or entire days of school rather than face a hostile environment where they experience continual harassment (GLSEN, 2009). School-based victimization denies LGBT students their right to an education (GLSEN). Students, who reported hearing homophobic remarks in schools, and reported being bullied, were absent more frequently. According to the GLSEN (2009) survey, 29.1% of students skipped class at least once in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Thirty percent missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable (GLSEN). Researchers reported that students were three times likelier to have missed classes (29.1% vs. 8.0%), and four times likelier to have missed at least one day of school (30.0% vs. 6.7%) in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, when compared to the general population of secondary school students (GLSEN). LGBT students were also three times as likely to have missed school in the past month if they had experienced high levels of victimization related to their sexual orientation (57.7% vs. 18.0%) or gender expression (54.3% vs. 19.9%; GLSEN). In addition, the report also found negative impacts on grades. The reported grade point average of students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression was almost half a grade lower than for students who were less often harassed (GLSEN).

In another study, delinquency was one indicator that was used in assessing victimization. Delinquency was measured as engaging in vandalism, being a member of a gang, and carrying a weapon onto school property (Swearer et al., in press, n.d.). The negative influence that is associated with peer pressure was found to predict involvement in bullying and victimization (Cook, Guerra, Kim, Sadek, & Williams, 2010). The incidence of in-school victimization experienced by LGBT students hinders their academic success and educational aspirations (GLSEN, 2009). LGBT students who are harassed because of their orientation or gender are more likely to experience academic problems. A (GLSEN) study suggested that LGBT students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression had grade point averages almost half a grade lower than for students who were less often harassed. Homophobic bullying not only affects students' abilities to achieve in school, but has long term implications as well. The study also suggested that LGBT students were more likely to report that they did not plan to pursue any type of post-secondary education (obtaining a high school diploma only or not finishing high school) than a random national sample of students (9.9% vs. 6.6%; GLSEN). Students who experienced high levels of in-school victimization because of their sexual orientation or gender expression were more likely than other students to report that they did not plan to pursue any post-secondary education (college, vocational-technical or trade school): About 14% of students who experienced high levels of victimization because of their gender expression or their sexual orientation did not plan to continue their education, compared to about 9% of those who had experienced low levels of victimization (GLSEN). One method for LGBT and all students to tackle the problem is to develop and their resiliency and protective mechanisms.

Resiliency and Protective Factors

Current research into homophobic bullying, and hearing negative or homophobic remarks in schools, indicated that it is important for education systems to identify risk and resiliency factors in an effort to promote safe school environments. There are a number of risk and protective factors that contribute to the experience that LGBT youth have in school. Risk factors are commonly understood as those experiences that tend to increase the likelihood for the development of problems or negative consequences in a young person's life (Wells, 2007). Protective or resiliency factors are identified as internal and external influences that can have a positive impact on healthy youth development by helping to protect them from engaging in unhealthy behaviors or destructive coping mechanisms (Wells). Wells' research exploring key stressors identified how LGBT youth experienced more risk factors (often with greater severity), fewer protective factors (such as supportive home and school environments), and higher incidents of depression and substance abuse when compared with their heterosexual peers.

Risk factors.

Key individual risk factors for adolescent suicide, in general, include feelings of hopelessness, a history of family dysfunction, sexual abuse, substance abuse, abuse, and the recent or attempted suicide of a family member or close friend (Remafedi, 1994; Russell & Joyner, 2001). In addition to these general risk factors, LGBT youth also face unique risk factors including, age of disclosure/coming out, family acceptance, and intrapersonal conflict regarding sexuality (Friedman, Koeske, Korr, Silvestre, & Sites, 2006; Remafedi, 1994). Gender is a prevailing risk factor for both girls and boys that are involved in bullying, both as perpetrators and victims (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). Research has found that boys are involved in bullying at greater rates than girls (Cook et al., 2010). Cook et al. indicated other

individual risk factors include grade level, ethnicity, religious orientation, low academic achievement, internalizing symptoms, and alcohol/drug use. Peer group factors included homophily, peer norms, delinquency, school climate, teacher attitudes and classroom characteristics.

Grade level.

Homophobic bullying can manifest itself starting with middle school aged children. Bullying has generally been shown to be most prevalent in middle school (Nansel et al., 2001). Research, however, has suggested that bullying peaks during school transition (i.e., between elementary and middle school and between middle and high school) as youth are negotiating new peer groups, and use bullying as a means to achieve social dominance (Pellegrini et al., 2011).

Ethnicity.

Involvement in homophobic bullying can be a cross-cultural phenomenon (Jimerson, Swearer, & Espelage, 2010) that transcends ethnicity. Research has shown that students, who are in the ethnic minority in a school, are more likely to be bullied than students who are in the ethnic majority (Graham, 2009).

Religious orientation.

Surprisingly, while the media has reported on the connection between homophobic bullying and religious orientation (i.e., Muslims in the United States), a paucity of research on this risk factor for bullying has been conducted. In a study of 243 Hindu, Muslim, and Pakistani children in the U.K., 57% of boys and 43% of girls reported being bullied because of religious or cultural differences (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000). Religious orientation is a risk factor for all bullied youth, including those who identify as LGBT. According to a (2008) report by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, most religious denominations continue to condemn homosexuality

as sinful and marginalize LGBT people. In the United States prejudice and discrimination against LGBT people is widespread, often making it difficult to be accepted in a school or community setting (SPRC, 2008).

Low academic achievement.

The relationship between homophobic bullying and academic achievement can be intricate. Some research has demonstrated that bully victims do poorly in school (Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, & Kernic, 2005), while other research has found that the connection between being bullied and low academic achievement is more robust when there is low parental support and school disengagement (Beran, 2008).

Internalizing symptoms.

Research has found that students who identify as being victims of bullying, and people who bully or perpetrate, all experience depressive disorders. In one study, 18% of bullying victims and 13% of bullies (perpetrators), experienced depression (Kumpulainen, Rasanen, & Puura, 2001), which is higher than the estimated 8.3% of adolescents who are diagnosed with a depressive disorder (NIMH, 2011). Bully-victims are at the greatest risk for experiencing co-morbid internalizing and externalizing problems (Cook et al., 2010). In a recent study, depression and suicidality were predictors of both bullying and victimization (Swearer et al., in press).

Alcohol / drug use.

The connection between alcohol/drug use and homophobic bullying has been highly researched. In a study of middle through high school students, researchers found that victims and non-victims were more likely than their non-aggressive counterparts to use drugs and

alcohol (Brockenbrough, Cornell, & Loper, 2002). A study of 43, 093 U.S. adults found that bullying was significantly correlated with lifetime alcohol and drug use (Vaughn, et al., 2010).

Homophily & Peer Norms

The theory of homophily suggests that there is an increased tendency to form social bonds with others who are considered to be similar, than there is a tendency to form bonds with others who are viewed as different (Espelage et al., 2003). When followers in a peer group are involved in bullying, they tend to take part. Additionally, students who are involved in bully perpetration tended to come from larger peer groups (Salmivalli, Huttunen, & Lagerspetz, 1997). According to Murdock and Bolch (2005), LGBT youth often have trouble fitting into traditional social groups in schools; leaving them without a sense of belonging. Psychologists have argued that the need to belong is a fundamental human motivation (Murdock & Bolch, 2005). Lower levels of school belonging have been associated with a range of outcomes including lower levels of school motivation and negative perceptions of school climate (Murdock & Bolch).

School Climate

Teachers and staff play an important role in creating a positive school climate. When the school climate is not supportive and unhealthy, then bullying and concomitant problems proliferate (Kasen, Johnson, Chen, Crawford, & Cohen, 2011). GLSEN, (2009) documented the negative effects of homophobic remarks in schools by students. Research is limited on the effects of hearing homophobic remarks from teachers. In a study by Murdock and Bolch (2005), LGBT students reported hearing derogatory statements such as “faggot” or “dyke”; by teachers; less than one time per month. Teacher attitudes and classroom characteristics can play a role in the development of a school’s climate.

Teacher attitudes and classroom characteristics.

When adults in the school system ignore bullying or feel that bullying is just “kids being kids”, then higher levels of bullying will exist (Holt, Keyes, & Koenig, 2011). There are four classroom characteristics that have been found to be associated with greater levels of bullying and victimization: (1) negative peer friendships; (2) poor teacher-student relationships; (3) lack of self-control; and (4) poor problem-solving among students (Doll, Song, Champion, & Jones, 2011). Poor classroom and teacher experiences compound students’ perceptions of a negative school environment. A recent study by (Poteat, Espelage, & Green, 2007) found that strong associations among bullying, sexual orientation, and homophobia have been related to negative school environments and over time related to negative psychological outcomes for students.

By understanding the risk factors, teachers, counselors and administrators can more effectively plan for interventions that promote the healthy development of LGBT youth. Data from the National School Climate Survey showed that over a 10 year period, between 1999 and 2009, there had been a decreasing trend in the frequency of students' experiences with more severe forms of bullying while harassment has remained relatively constant (GLSEN, 2009). Even though it appears that homophobic bullying has declined, the impact of its effect is more severe than ever (GLSEN).

Perceptions of School Safety

According to the 2009 GLSEN study, students expressed concern over school safety. In the study, 72.4% of students who heard homophobic remarks, such as “faggot” or “dyke,” frequently or often at school, felt unsafe at school (GLSEN). When hearing (e.g. “that’s so gay”), 88.9% of students felt it was used negatively while 86.5% of students reported feeling distressed (GLSEN). Nearly two-thirds (61.1%) of students reported that they felt unsafe in

school not only because of what they hear, but also because of their sexual orientation (GLSEN). Furthermore, more than a third (39.9%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression (GLSEN). By contrast, 16.4% felt unsafe based on their religion, 9.8% because of their gender, 7.6% due to their race, 5.3% as a result of their disability and 13.2 % identified other reasons (GLSEN). Other indicators reported in the survey stated that hearing homophobic remarks in schools not only affected students physically and emotionally, but behaviorally as well. Absenteeism was one behavioral problem that was highlighted by GLSEN).

Effects of Homophobic Remarks

The impact of bullying and homophobic remarks and language used in school can have a negative impact on a student's self-esteem, academics and perception of safety. According to Birkett, Espelage, and Koenig (2008), "students who were questioning their sexual orientation reported the most bullying, the most homophobic victimization, the most drug use, the most feelings of depression and suicidality, and more truancy than either heterosexual or LGBT students" (p. 989). In a study conducted by Safe Schools North Carolina (SSNC, 2006), 904 high school students were surveyed about homophobic language heard in schools. When asked how often the expression "that's so gay" or "you're so gay" was heard in school, 68.9% of students responded that these expressions were heard frequently or often (SSNC). Other homophobic remarks such as "faggot", "dyke", or "queer", were heard frequently or often by almost two-thirds (64.2%) of youth (SSNC). Homophobic remarks were most often made by other students; 72.6% of students reported that they heard other students make homophobic remarks frequently or often whereas 3.5% of students reported teachers or school staff made homophobic remarks frequently or often (SSNC). Students also reported that a teacher or staff member intervened frequently or often (26.4%) of the time and rarely or never (47.0%) of the

time (SSNC). When a homophobic remark was made in the presence of a teacher or staff member, they responded nearly 50% of the time (SSNC). The lack of teacher and staff intervention could have a large impact on students' perceptions of safety in the buildings (SSNC). Teachers are often viewed as leaders in the building and commonly associated with being people whom students can report to when there is a disruption of services (SSNC). All staff, including administrators and security officers, are commonly responsible for monitoring all areas of the building. Youth reported that hallways and cafeterias were the places in which homophobic language happened most frequently, followed by buses and classrooms (SSNC).

Findings from the 2006 SSNC study, of the frequency of homophobic remarks heard in schools, parallels findings from the 2009 GLSEN national study, especially when students were asked how bothered they were by hearing terms such as "gay", "faggot" or "queer". Each study reported approximately 40% of students were extremely distressed when hearing homophobic those remarks (GLSEN, 2009; SSNC).

Despite limited research on students hearing homophobic remarks in schools, the topic is garnering attention from school districts across the globe. Research efforts have resulted in approximately 20 national and international studies since the 1970's. The severity of the issue has been documented by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2003). SAMHSA appealed to parents and school personnel to no longer consider bullying just a part of growing up, as it is harmful to both the perpetrators and the victims. Furthermore, bullying has been linked to behavioral and emotional difficulties, long-term negative outcomes, and violence (Murdock & Bolch, 2005).

The consequences of homophobic bullying can be so severe to the point that death can be a result for some students. Future implications are grim, unless we as a society make relevant

changes. A key factor in the development of strategies and interventions to advocate for LGBT youth are bullied or who hear homophobic remarks in schools, is promoting awareness of the issue. Research has shown that the most effective strategies are proactive. In an effort to continue research, an initial investigation into the perceptions of bullying and homophobic remarks heard in schools is imperative.

Schools can be an environment where LGBT youth face harassment and victimization, fostering heightened feelings of being both physically and emotionally unsafe. Once students develop a reputation for being “victims” among their peers, they often get caught up in a vicious cycle of anxiety, depression, and other forms of behavior that signal “weakness” (Murdock & Bolch, 2005). The findings of a study (Murdock & Bolch) offered critical implications for school personnel working with LGBT youth. A survey of LGBT youth suggested that there continues to be greater levels of victimization in schools than access to support services (Murdock & Bolch). Current research is limited in addressing interventions by school personnel. Intervening with LGBT students who hear homophobic remarks in school is critical to break the cycle of harassment and victimization (Murdock & Bolch). The outcomes of LGBT students who are bullied or hear homophobic remarks in schools can have negative effects on social and emotional development.

Several risk factors for LGBT students who are a bullied or hear homophobic remarks in schools are: verbal and physical harassment, academic difficulty, absenteeism and social emotional issues. The risk factors can lead to LGBT youth feeling unsafe at school and can also result in suicide. Resiliency factors for LGBT youth are seeking out supportive staff members, being aware of the risk of suicide, and the effects of alcohol and drug use.

It is clear that there is an urgent need for action to create safer and more inclusive schools for LGBT students (GLSEN, 2009). Understanding how often staff intervenes, the consequences of being harassed in school, and the perceptions of school safety are important factors to reducing and eliminating the effects of homophobic bullying and hearing homophobic remarks in schools. Specifically, the hypothesis tested in this study is that hearing homophobic remarks in school is correlated to the perceptions of school safety for LGBT youth. The following questions are vital to understanding the problem:

1. How often do students hear homophobic remarks in schools?
2. How often do teachers or adults intervene?
3. How many students have been bullied as a result of gender or sexual identity?

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding regarding the associations of hearing homophobic remarks in schools, efficacy of staff intervention and feeling safe at school as experienced by LGBT youth.

Methods

In attempting to understand the effects of hearing homophobic remarks as it pertains to students' perceptions of safety a survey was conducted in an urban setting in the Northeast United States. The district is comprised of 31,653 students made up of 64% Black or African American, 22% Hispanic or Latino, 10% White and 3% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (New York State Education Department, 2011).

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of 10th, 11th and 12th grade students. The sample population ranged in age from 14 to 19 years of age and consisted of the following racial

identities: African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American and Caucasian. A total of 316 students were invited to take to the survey with 112 completing it, for a response rate of 35 percent.

Procedures

A 20 question survey was administered by five classroom instructors during their Career and Technology Education classes. When exploring survey procedures, best practices determined that conducting the surveys in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes was the most effective course of action as all students were enrolled and cycled through these classes throughout the length of the study. The paper survey consisted of one doubled sheet of paper asking students to supply their own writing instrument. An additional benefit to the survey is that is that it took less than five minutes to complete.

To ensure anonymity, the surveys were delivered to teachers during non-class time. The students were told that a graduate student was conducting a survey on school climate and hearing homophobic remarks in schools and those participants will be entered into a drawing for five \$20 gift cards to a national department store. The teachers tracked which students took part in the survey by keeping a log of the participant names. Upon completion of the project, each teacher drew one name from their roster of students who took the surveys. The gift cards were given to the teacher ahead of time and the researcher was not made aware of the survey participants or the winners.

One measure taken to protect the participant's rights was the passive parental consent form (See Appendix A). Due to school district guidelines, a passive consent was mailed out to all the parents. If a consent form was returned not permitting their child to take part in the study, the school's head administrative officer collected the information and notified that student's

teacher. Zero consent forms were returned and the researcher had no contact with any of the subjects during the study.

Another protective measure was the removal and deletion of the paper surveys, the survey results and the data analysis spreadsheet from the researchers computer; upon completion of the project. Completed surveys were tabulated by hand with the answers recorded on an excel spreadsheet. The data was stored, on a portable flash drive and an external hard drive with actual surveys double locked in a desk drawer. The data was removed from both the flash drive and hard drive, upon completion of the research, according to the United States Department of Defense standards.

Instrument

The instrument applied in this study was a school climate survey adapted from the 2009 GLSEN national study of LGBTQ youths' perceptions of safety in school (See Appendix B). Permission for use was given via email (See Appendix C). In the survey, students' experiences were counted with respect to their perceptions of a school climate. Questions included hearing homophobic remarks in school, feeling unsafe in school because of personal characteristics; such as sexual orientation, gender and race/ethnicity. The survey consisted of 20 questions asking participants to respond using a four point Likert type scale. In terms of the dynamics surrounding homophobic remarks heard in schools, the survey measured the frequency of the type of remarks heard, who made them, where they were heard and how often staff intervened.

Additionally, students were asked to report their personal experiences resulting from verbal, physical and emotional abuse as a result of their sexual or gender identity. The Likert type responses varied between questions. Questions #1, #2, #3, #5, #6a - #6h asked the students to choose between a frequently, often, sometimes, rarely and never scale while three of the

questions, #7, #8 and #9, asked students to respond to always, most of the time, some of the time and never. Question #4 asked for a response of most of the students, some of the students and few of the students, while question #10 asked for a yes or no response. A yes response to question #10 prompts the participant to reply to three questions which ask the frequency, location and reasons for being a target of a single or repeated act of emotional, verbal or physical abuse in school.

Reliability

The survey did not consist of characteristics commonly associated with test-retest or alternate form reliability. Many response selections were experientially and emotionally based allowing for a different response at a different time in the participant's life. As a student's level of happiness or anxiety changes, so can the way in which they respond to the survey.

A Cronbach's Alpha or coefficient of reliability test was computed for the twenty items was .872, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency (See Figure 1).

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Cases	20	100
Valid	20	100
Excluded	0	0
Total	20	100

Figure 1

This falls within the Cronbach's alpha range of .70 to .90, reported by GLSEN in their recent national study (GLSEN, 2009). The author's study shows a high internal constancy between how often they hear homophobic remarks in schools, how often adults intervene and being bullied as a factor of gender or sexual orientation.

Results

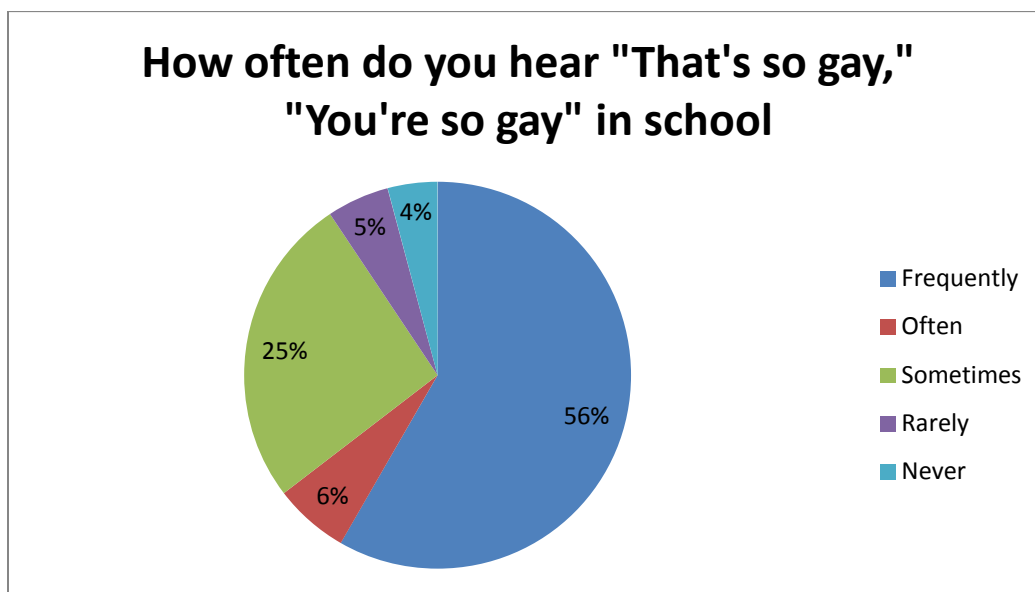
A total of 112 students, 35%, participated in the survey for a response rate of 35% of the entire student population. Of the 112 completed surveys, there was one write-in response which was eliminated from the data analysis.

Analysis

Percentages and mean scores were used to factor frequencies of responses. Percentages and mean scores were used with a specific focus on students who have experienced a single or repeated act of emotional, verbal or physical abuse at school and students who believe they were targeted as a result of gender or sexual orientation.

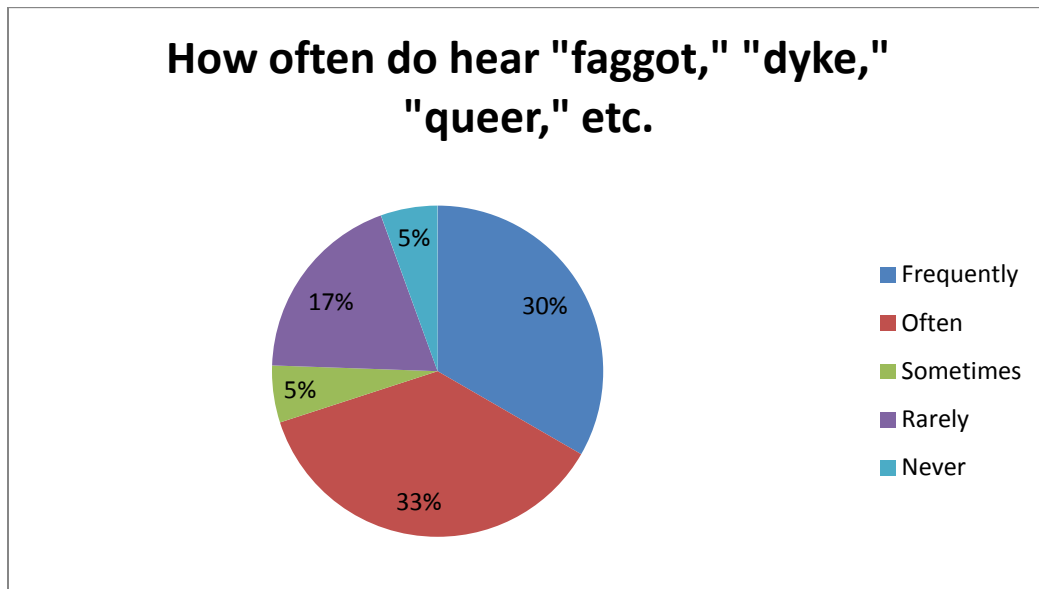
Individual Survey Results

#1) *How often do you hear the expression "That's so gay," or "You're so gay" in school?*



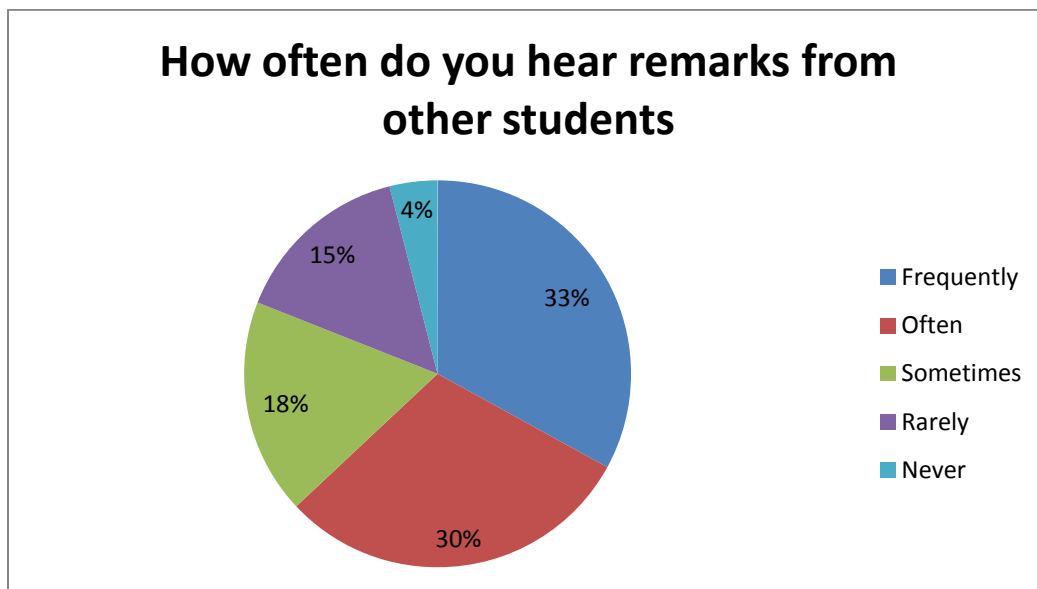
The largest number of responses were frequently at 56 or 50% and sometimes at 28 or 25%. The mean was 1.29.

#2) How often have you heard other remarks used in school (such as “faggot,” “dyke,” “queer,” etc.)?



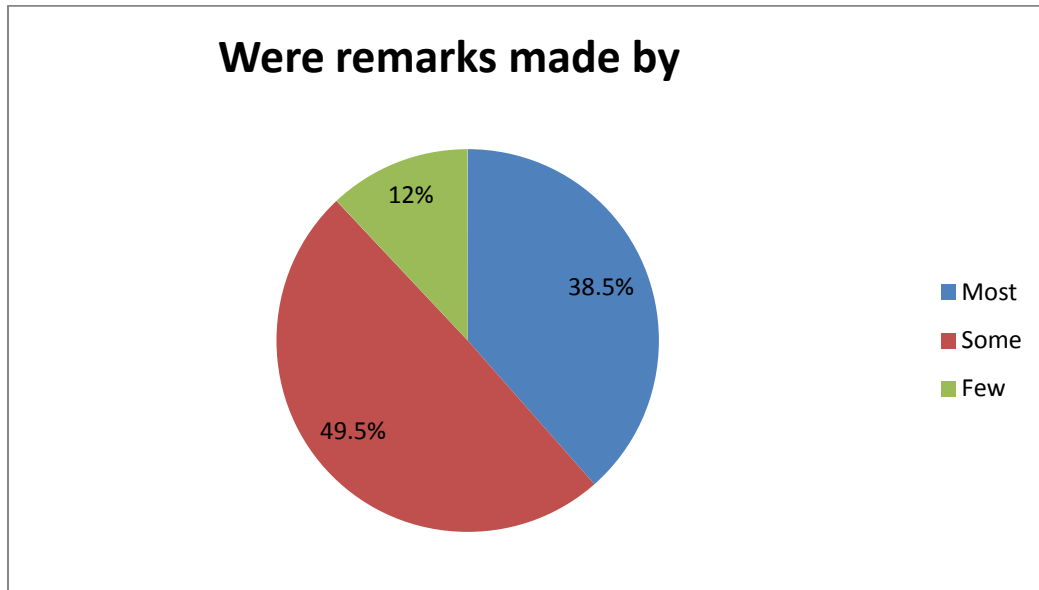
The largest number of responses were often at 37 or 33%, and frequently at 34 or 30%. The mean was 2.34.

#3) How often do you hear these remarks from other students?



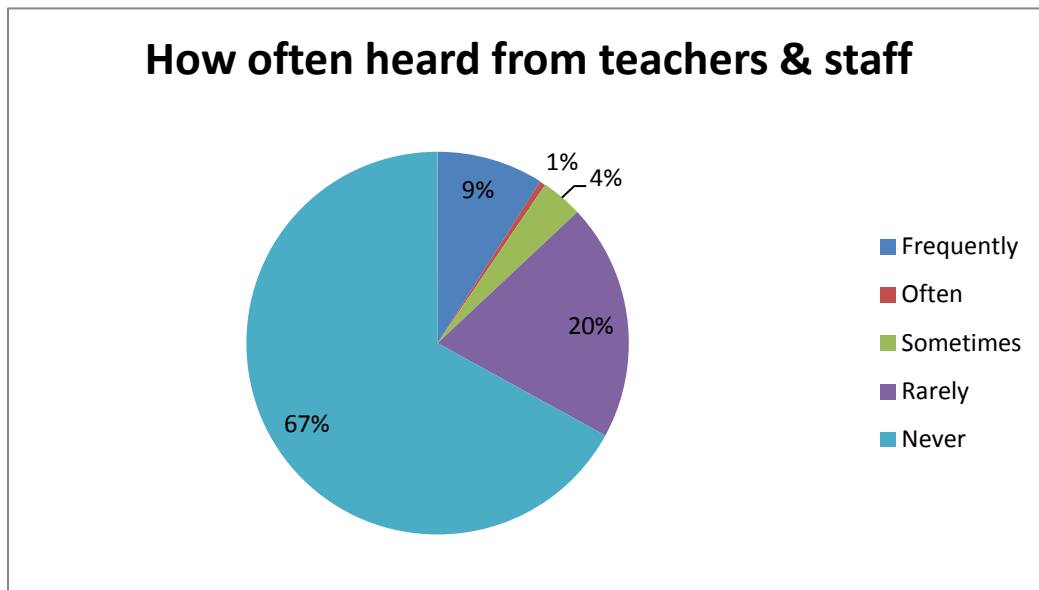
The largest number of responses were frequently at 37 or 33% and often at 34 or 30%. The mean was 2.27.

#4) Would you say that those remarks are made by.



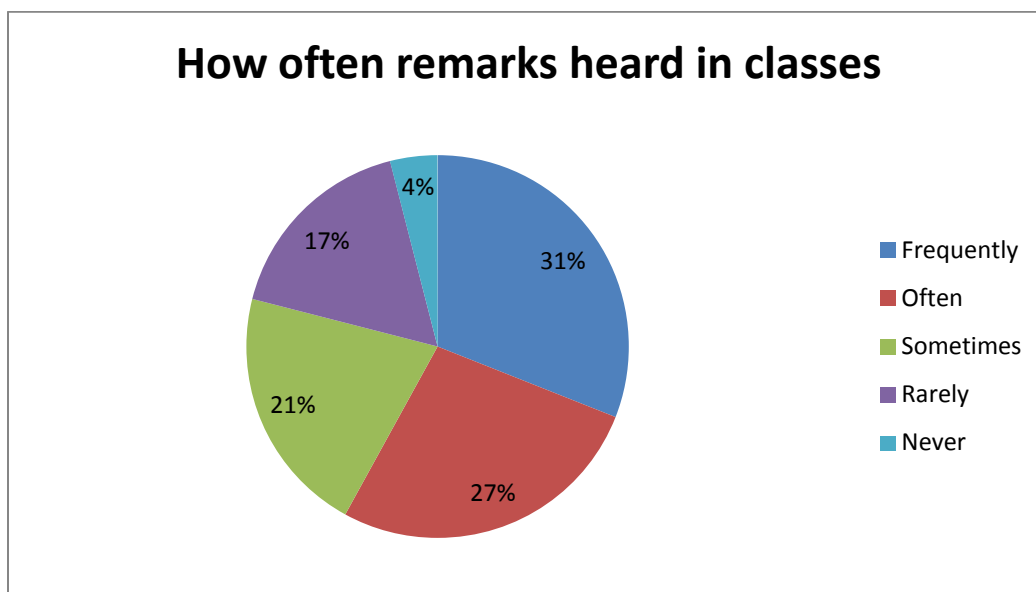
The largest number of responses were most of the students at 54 or 49.5% and some of the students at 42 or 38.5%. The mean was 1.73.

#5) How often do you hear these remarks from teachers or school staff?



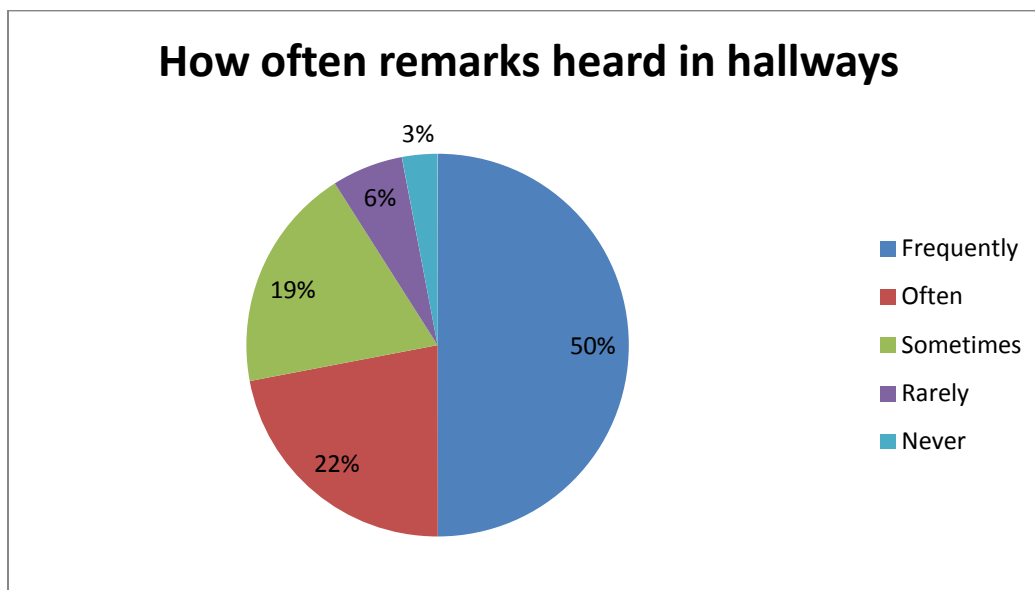
The largest number of responses were never at 75 or 67% and rarely was 22 or 20%. The mean was 4.36.

#6a) How often do you hear those remarks in classes?



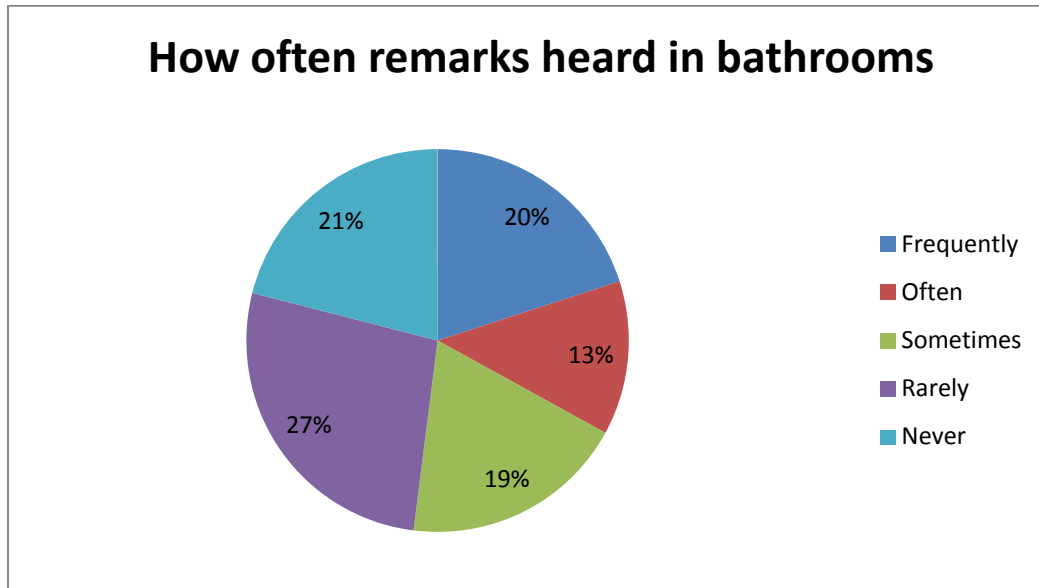
The largest number of responses were frequently at 35 or 31% and often at 30 or 27%. The mean was 2.36.

#6b) How often do you hear those remarks in hallways?



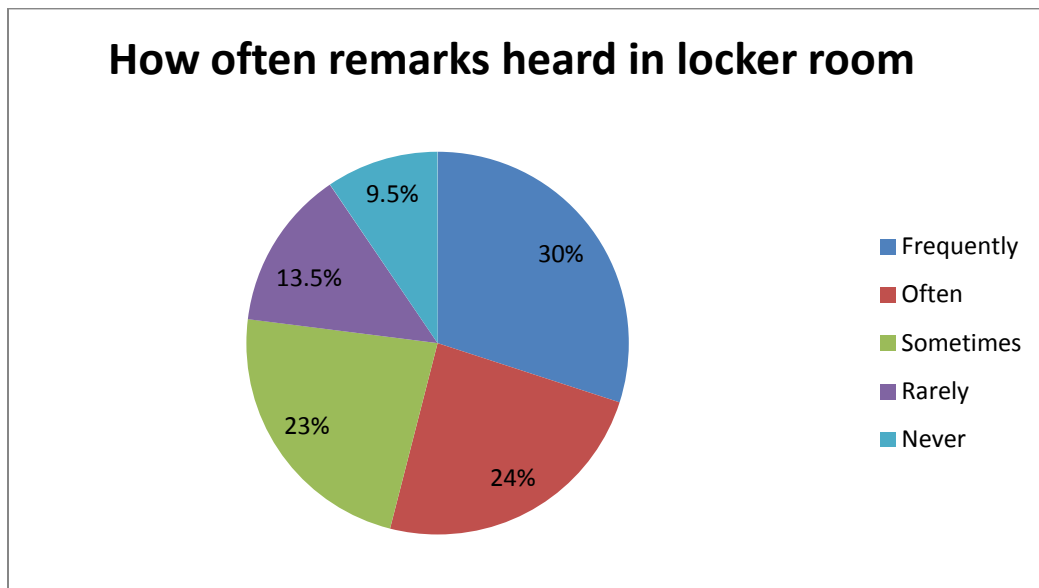
The largest number of responses were frequently at 56 or 50% and often was 25 or 22%. The mean was 1.90.

#6c) How often do you hear those remarks in bathrooms?



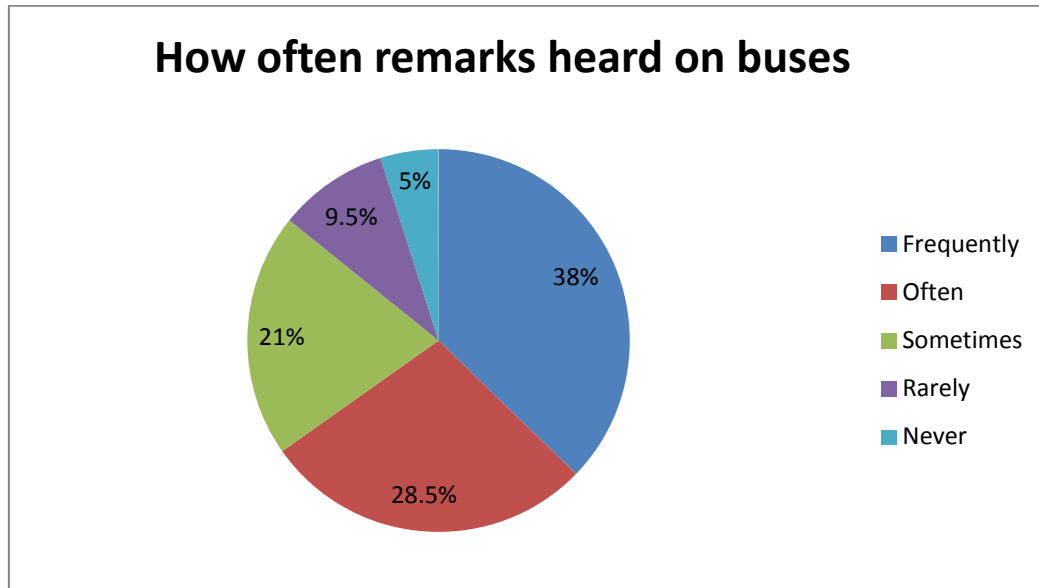
The largest number of responses were rarely at 31 or 27% and never at 23 or 21%. The mean was 3.16.

#6d) How often do you hear those remarks in locker rooms?



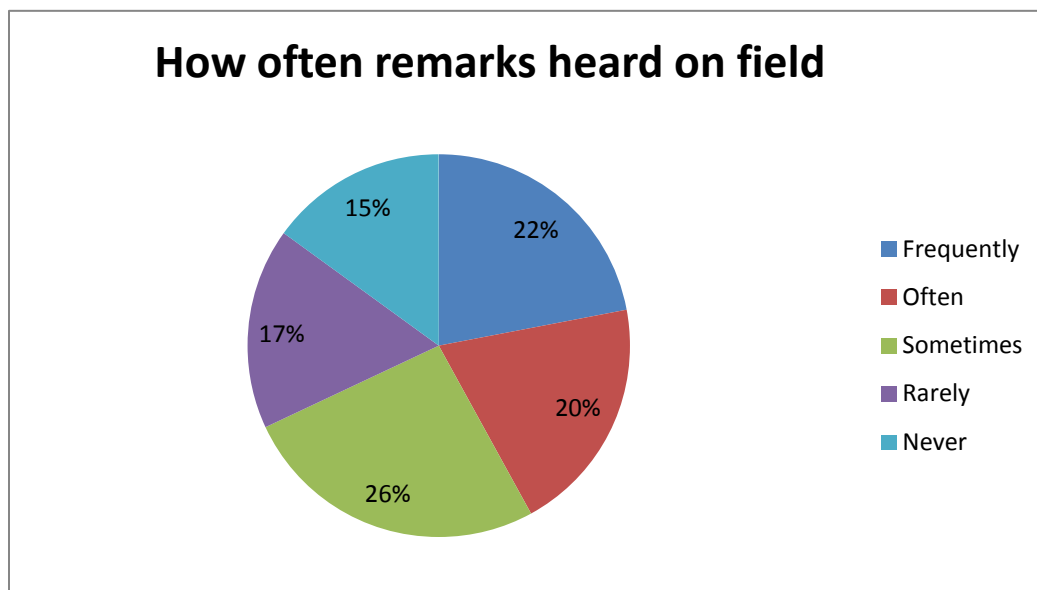
The largest number of responses were frequently at 34 or 30% and often at 27 or 24%. The mean was 2.46.

#6e) How often do you hear those remarks on buses?



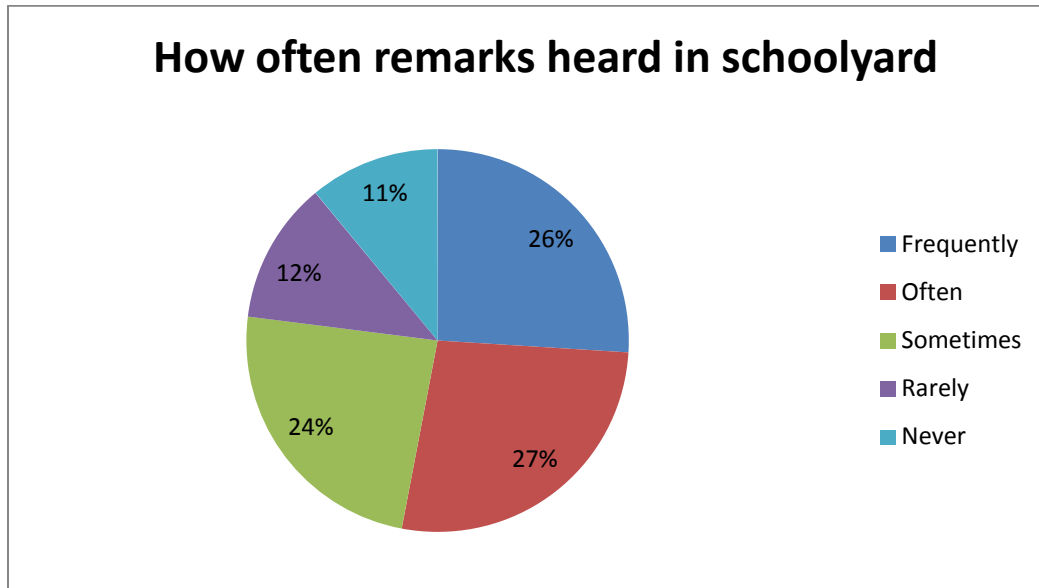
The largest number of responses were frequently at 42 or 38%, and often at 33 or 28.5%. The mean was 2.15.

#6f) How often do you hear those remarks in/on an athletic/field?



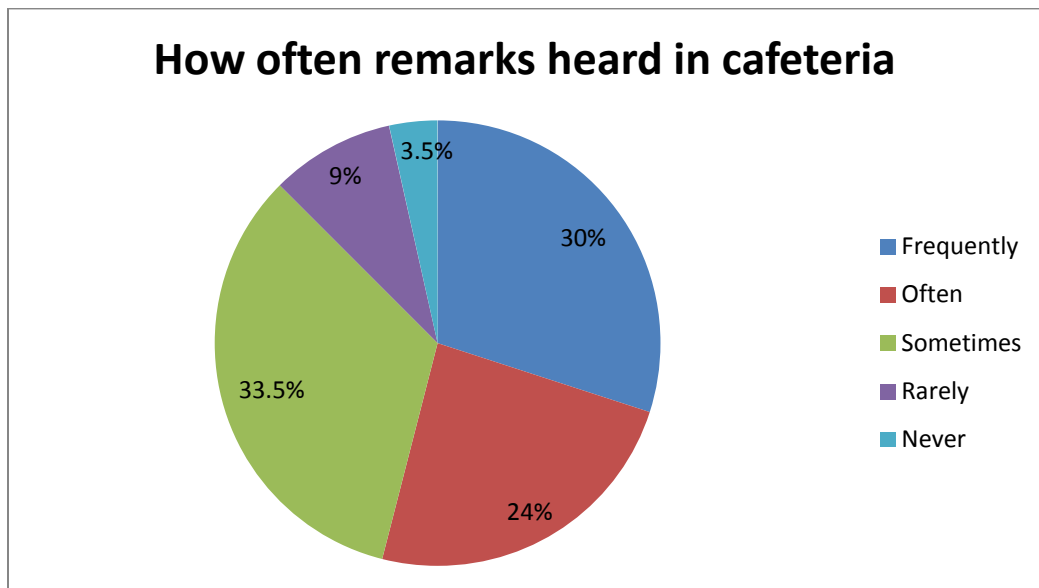
The largest number of responses were sometimes at 29 or 26% and frequently was 25 or 22%. The mean was 2.83.

#6g) How often do you hear those remarks in schoolyard or school grounds?



The largest number of responses were often at 31 or 27% and frequently at 29 or 26%. The mean was 2.54.

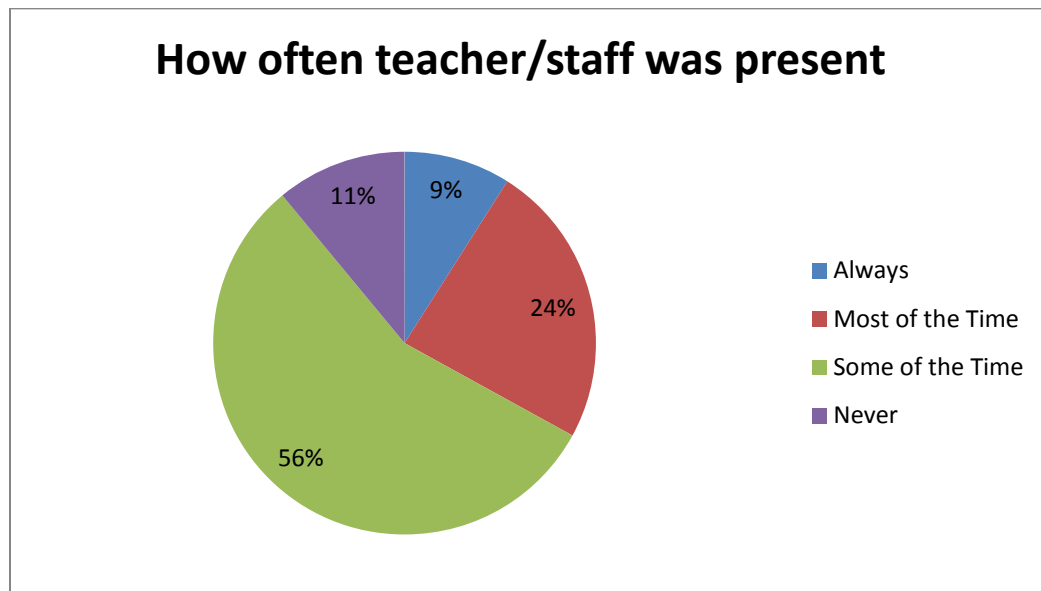
#6h) How often do you hear those remarks in cafeteria?



The largest number of responses were sometimes at 38 or 33.5% and frequently at 34 or 30%.

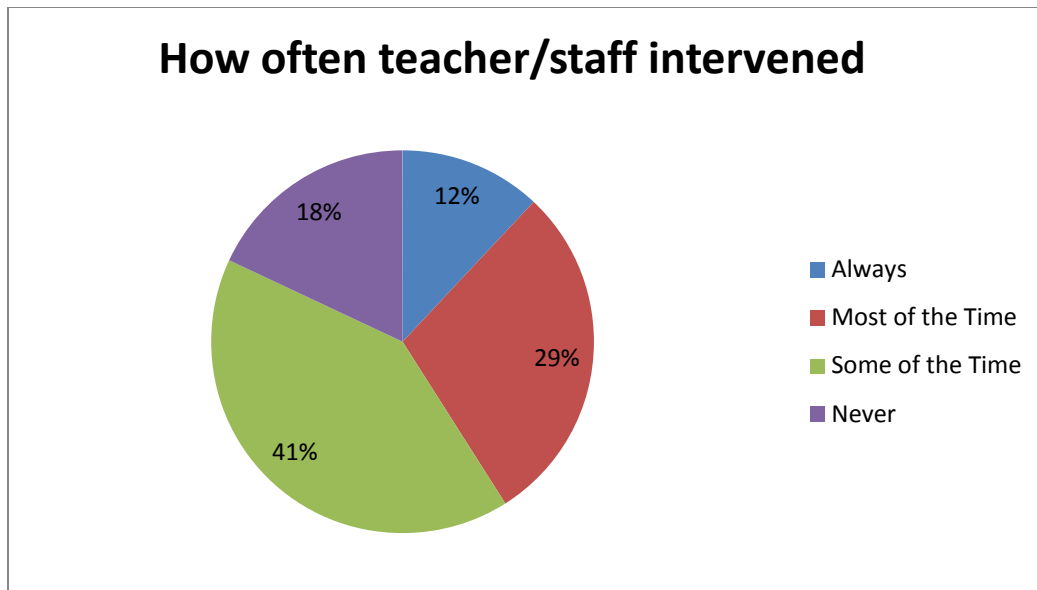
The mean was 2.30.

#7) When you hear those remarks, how often has a teacher or other school staff person been present?



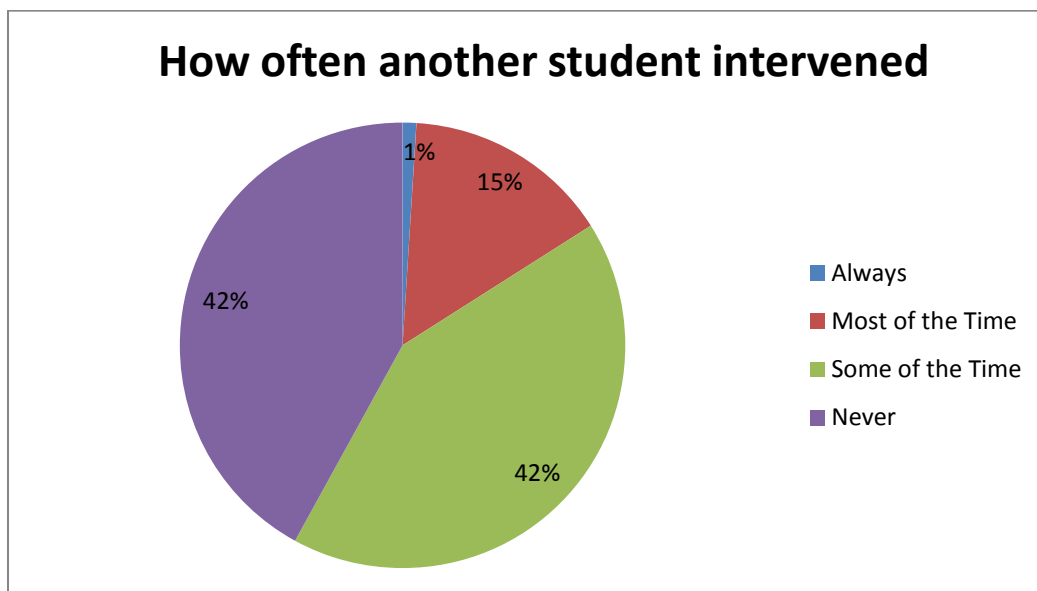
The largest number of responses were some of the time at 64 or 56% and most of the time at 27 or 24%. The mean was 2.29.

#8) When those remarks are made and a teacher or other school staff person is present, how often does the teacher or staff person intervene?



The largest number of responses were some of the time at 46 or 41% and most of the time at 33 or 29%. The mean was 2.35.

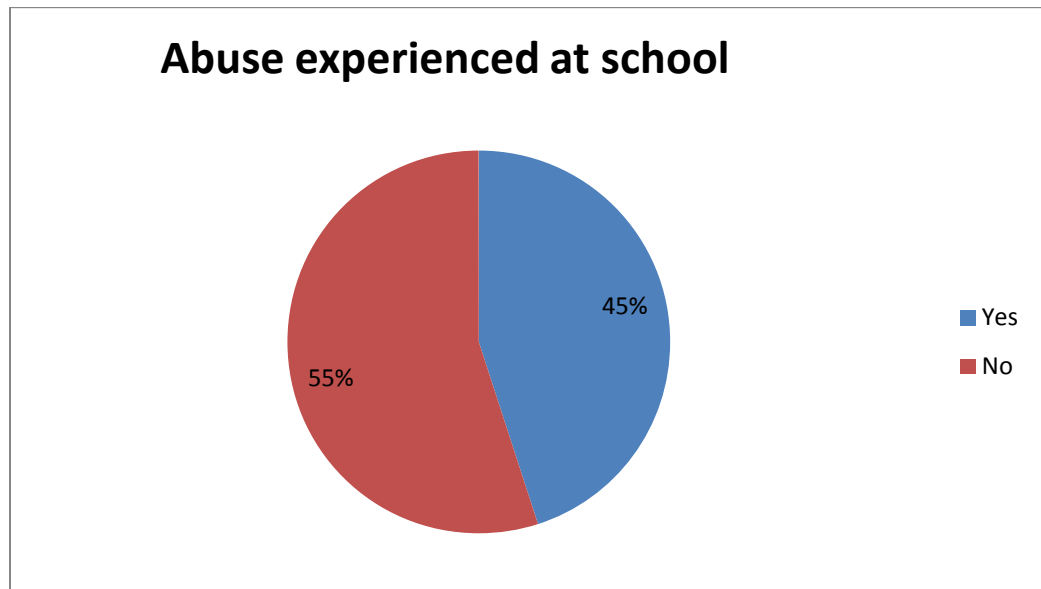
#9) When you hear those remarks, how often does another student intervene?



The largest number of responses were never at 47 or 42% and some of the time at 46 or 42%.

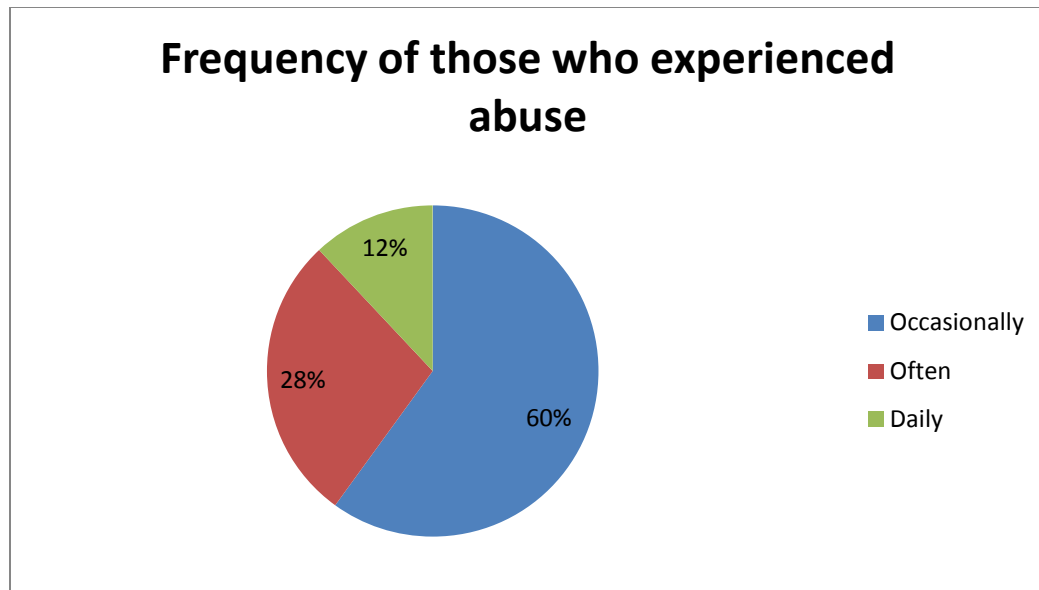
The mean was 2.35.

#10) Have you ever experienced a single or repeated act of emotional, verbal or physical abuse at school? (I.e. hitting, kicking, rumors, unwelcomed language or other actions)



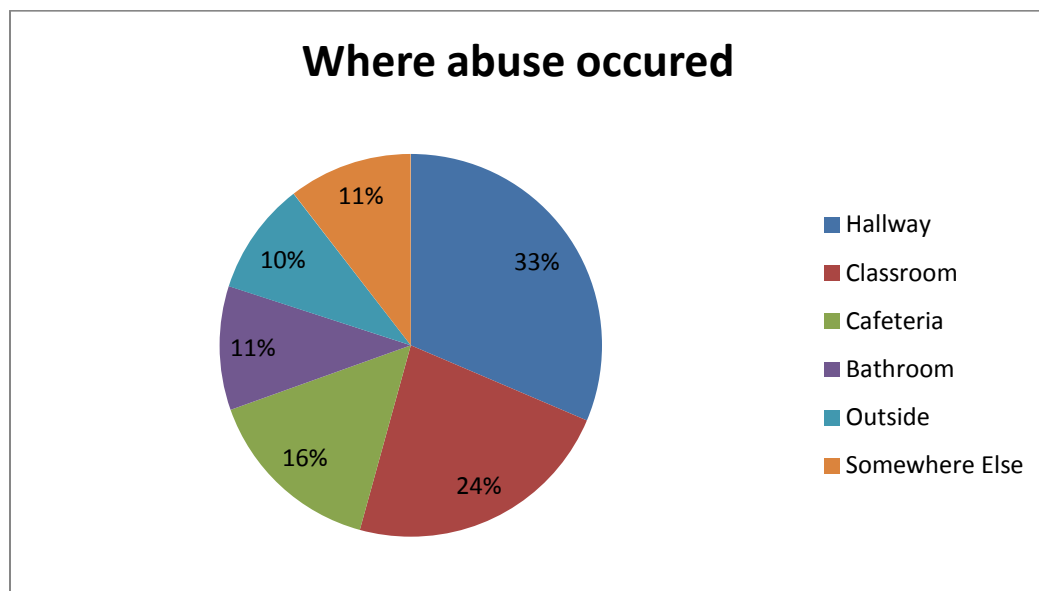
The total number of students who responded yes was 50 or 45%, no was 62 or 55%, with a mean of 1.55.

#10a) Have you ever experienced a single or repeated act of emotional, verbal or physical abuse at school? (I.e. hitting, kicking, rumors, unwelcomed language or other actions) Those that answered yes to question were asked to move onto the rest of the survey when those that answered no were not asked to move forward. The students who responded yes were asked how often they experienced a single or repeated act of emotional, verbal or physical abuse at school.



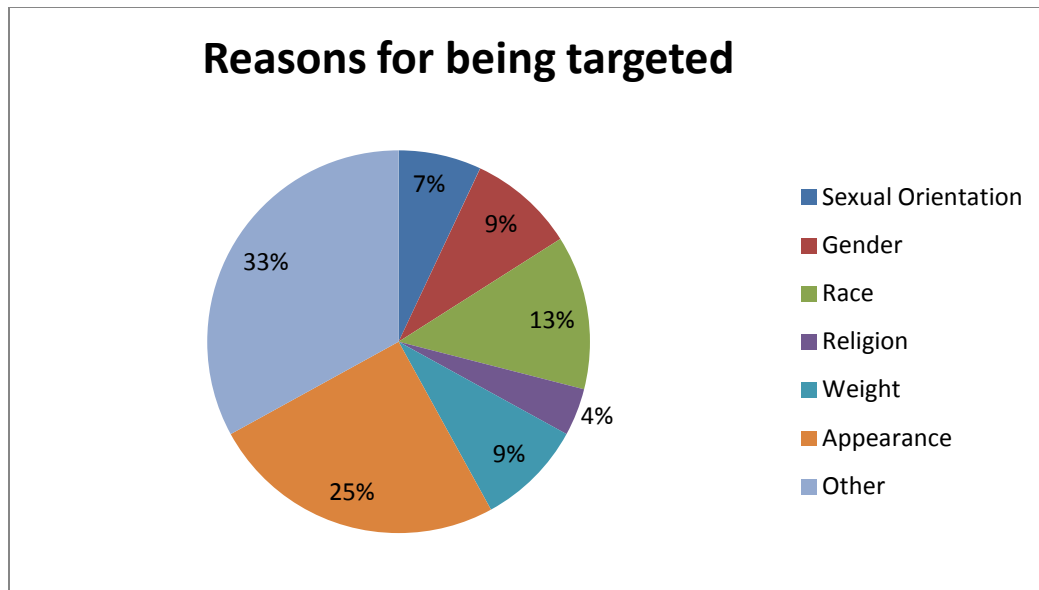
The largest number of responses were occasionally at 30 or 60% and often at 14 or 28%. The mean was 1.52.

#10b) Where did it happen?



The largest number of responses were hallway at 35 or 33%, 24 for classroom or 24% and 17 for cafeteria or 16%.

#10c) Do you believe you were targeted for any of the following reasons.



The largest number of responses were other at 23 or 33% appearance at 17 or 25%.

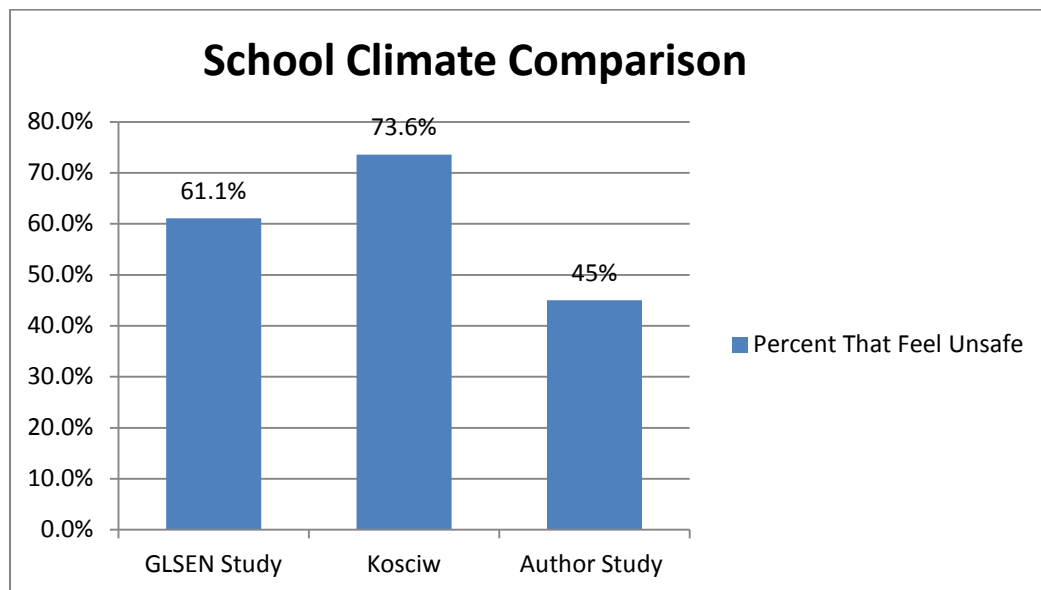
Interpretation

There were several key findings. The first significant finding was the frequency of hearing homophobic remarks in schools. The data indicated 91% of students hear the terms “*That’s so gay,*” or “*You’re so gay*” at school frequently, often or sometimes as opposed to 9% that indicated rarely or never hearing those terms. Additionally, 78% of students indicated hearing terms such as “faggot,” “dyke,” or “queer” as opposed to 22% that indicated rarely or never hearing terms. The data indicated that 81% of homophobic remarks were frequently, often and sometimes heard from students while 13% of students surveyed indicated hearing those same remarks from teachers or staff, frequently, often and sometimes. The three highest reported percentages of where students heard frequently, often and sometimes heard homophobic remarks were in the hallway, 91%, on the bus, 85% and in their classes, 79%. The survey data indicated that 89% of the time teachers were present when frequently, often and sometimes hearing homophobic remarks. Students reported that 82% of the teachers present frequently, often and sometimes intervened when homophobic remarks were heard.

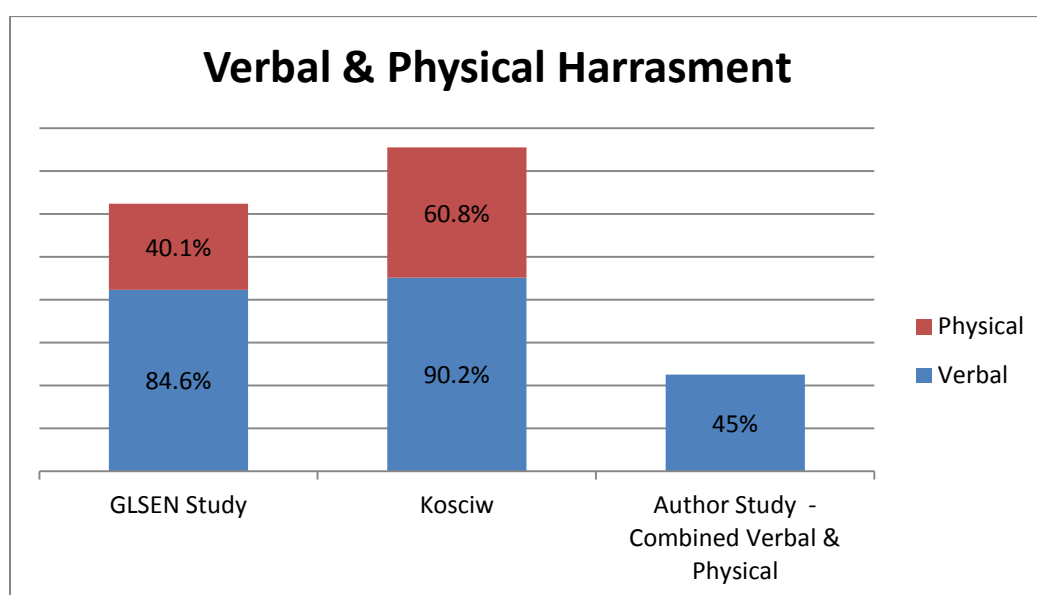
Overall, 45% of students who completed the survey indicated experiencing a single or repeated act of emotional, verbal or physical abuse at school (I.e. hitting, kicking, rumors, unwelcomed language or other actions). Where students reported being emotionally, verbally or physically abused, 88% indicated experiencing abuse occasionally and often. When comparing this data to that of where students hear homophobic remarks, the hallway, 33%, the classroom, 23%, and cafeteria, 16%, were the most common locations where such actions occurred.

Comparative analysis

In 2009, GLSEN conducted a comprehensive nationwide study on the perceptions of school climate by LGBTQ students. According to the study, 61.1% of students reported that they felt unsafe in school not only because of what they hear, but also because of their sexual orientation (GLSEN, 2009). In a 2008 study, Kosciw et al. (2008) surveyed over 6,000 self-identified LGBT youth ages 13-21 and found: 73.6% of youth heard homophobic remarks often or frequently at school. When comparing this author's study, 45% of students indicated feeling unsafe with only 16% of that sample feeling unsafe due to remarks made against their sexual orientation or gender.



In other comparisons, the (GLSEN) study reported 84.6% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed and 40.1% reported being physically harassed. Kosciw's study reported 90.2% of youth reported experiencing verbal harassment at school because of their sexual identity; and 60.8% of youth experienced physical harassment because of their sexual orientation (2008). The author's study reports results much lower than the two national studies. A combination of both physical and verbal harassment results in 45% of the students feeling unsafe.



Drawbacks

Due to the sensitive nature of the possibility of students' self-disclosure students were not asked to report their sexual identity or sexual gender or preferences, but just asked if students experienced emotional, verbal or physical abuse as a result of their sexual orientation or gender. The data revealed that 16% of the tallies indicated abuse in those areas. In contrast, 25% of the response indicated abuse as a result appearance and 33% were indicated in the other category. The students were provided space for comments in the other sections, although no students chose to respond in the comment section.

Discussion and Implications

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth are often targets of negative and derogatory comments (GLSEN, 2009). The present condition of LGBT students in school settings, as substantiated by the many facts and figures presented in this report, is often marred by hearing homophobic remarks in a variety of settings and conditions. Many instances include verbal and physical harassment and abuse.

Up to 90% (GLSEN, 2009) of LGBTQ youth reported being harassed in school primarily by other students or in some cases, by staff and teachers. The writer's study shows that 45% of students feel unsafe at school. Despite lower reported percentages of school safety in this writer's study, 17%; the problem continues to be prevalent. The range of emotions experienced by targeted youth can result in a poor overall school experience, including poor academic performance. As a result, these students may be unable to get into college or higher education (GLSEN, 2009).

Strategies and interventions

Creating a safe school environment takes effort from an entire community. GLSEN has conducted comprehensive studies and considered a leader in gay education and awareness in schools. Administrators, teachers, counselors, student and the community must all take in order create a safe school environment for all student to learn and grow.

GLSEN offers several suggestions for educators that are available to help ensure that all students feel safe at school. One measure that can be taken is creating a safe space at school. A Safe Space is a welcoming, supportive and safe environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students (GLSEN, 2009). A Safe Space, often designated by an upside

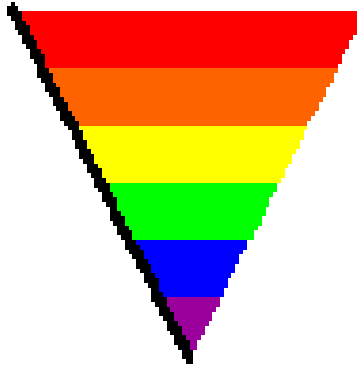


Figure 2: GLSEN Safe Space Logo

down multicolored triangle, is designed to visibly mark people and places that are “safe” for LGBT students. When students and staff put stickers on their lockers, backpacks, binders, or office doors, it stands out as an affirmation of LGBT people and lets others know that they are a safe person to approach for support and guidance (GLSEN). Displaying LGBT-inclusive materials make a classroom or school inclusive. School personnel can hang the Safe Space poster or stickers, display posters for GLBT History Month, LGBT Pride Month or other LGBT material that will let students know these are safe places (GLSEN). Other factors to consider are the existence of straight allies. Straight allies play an important role toward the success of a safe place program. A straight ally is any non-LGBT person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBT people (GLSEN). It is important for straight allies to demonstrate that LGBT people are not alone as they work to improve school climate, and to take a stand in places where it might not be safe for LGBT people to be out or visible (GLSEN).

Another initiative is to for schools to incorporate LGBT materials into their curriculum. GLSEN’s 2009 National School Climate Survey tells us that when asked whether they had been taught about LGBT people, history or events in school, a vast majority (87.3%) of students reported that such topics were not taught in any of their classes (GLSEN, 2009). Schools can include LGBT history into their curriculum by conducting GLSEN lessons (See Appendix D) in

the classroom (GLSEN). School staff can access GLSEN's Booklink (See Appendix E) an online resource, to help you find grade appropriate LGBT themed or inclusive books and videos (GLSEN). Other resources available for educators are the *GLSEN Educators Guide* to the *Think Before You Speak* campaign (See Appendix F) (GLSEN). The guide will show teachers, counselors and other educators how to teach their students about anti-LGBT language in schools. Schools can also encourage students to participate in one of GLSEN's Action Days. Students and staff can show their support by taking part in the Day of Silence (April) (See Appendix G) where you pledge not to use anti-gay rhetoric or Ally Week (October) (See Appendix H) where allies promote Gay Straight Alliances. There are also lesson plans for teachers for No Name-Calling Week which held each January in schools across the country (GLSEN). Teachers can download lesson plans (Appendix I) that they can incorporate in their classroom.

Developing a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) is another way to promote school wide support for LGBT students. GSAs provide leadership development, networking opportunities and a safe zone for youth. Research has shown that youth whose schools have GSAs are less likely to report feeling unsafe (Kosciw, 2004). Establishing a GSA is a vital component toward building a safe environment for youth insomuch that the Equal Access Act, a federal law that requires all public secondary schools receiving federal funding, to provide the same meeting facilities to all non-curriculum related clubs regardless of what their religious, political, philosophical or other beliefs or discussions may be (SSNC, 2006). This act also pertains to equitable treatment regarding publicity of club events through posters, bulletins, or in school publications (SSNC).

Recommendations

Several measures can be taken to improve school climate. First, provide school personnel with trainings that raise awareness about issues relevant to sexual orientation and gender identity/expression and to develop skills to interrupt verbal harassment (SSNC, 2006). Appropriate trainings will alert school personnel to the significance of interrupting homophobic language. Trainings could also provide school staff with basic tools with which they can implement the intervention techniques. Ideally all school personnel should attend such trainings, however administrators, teachers, counselors, and school resource officers are of particular importance because of the frequency with which they interact with and supervise students (SSNC). The content of such training typically includes activities and information designed to: (a) raise awareness of the impact of homophobic language and harassment based upon sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression; (b) increase knowledge of legal issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression and school settings; (c) develop strategies for and comfort with interrupting homophobic language and harassment based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; and (d) provide access to local and national resources for school personnel to assist students in dealing with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SSNC). Some of these types of trainings are available from your state's Safe School Program, the GLSEN Network, the American Civil Liberties Union and youth based non-profit organizations in your area.

The second recommendation is to advocate for the inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in school non-harassment, non-bullying, and non-discrimination policies (SSNC, 2006). The intention is that by explicitly raising awareness of these categories to the education policy makers; the message is sent that hearing homophobic remarks and

homophobic bullying is not tolerable. In absence of a clear directive, school personnel may be less likely to intervene out of fear of an accusation of promoting a homosexual lifestyle (SSNC). The lack of intervention by school officials and staff sends a message that such behaviors are accepted.

The third recommendation is to include sexual orientation and gender identity resources such as pamphlets, brochures, websites, and community agency listings that accompany alongside other resources that are provided to students. Appendix B provides a list of some of the organizations that may be accessed. Additionally, books could be added to library catalogs that discuss relevant gender issues. Many recent books on adolescent development now include these topics and there are many anthologies of youth experiences of dealing with their sexual orientation (SSNC, 2006). Minimally, the school counselor should be equipped with these resources as the counseling center may be a place where students could request information regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

The final recommendation is to assess the pervasiveness of hearing homophobic remarks in schools and perceptions of school safety that occurs in schools. An annual assessment can inform school administrators and school personnel about the effectiveness of existing policies or interventions over time (SSNC, 2006). Data collected can provide understanding about precise interventions that may be implemented to assure a safe climate. For example, the writer's study indicated that hearing homophobic remarks occurred most frequently in hallways, on buses and in the classroom as compared to bathrooms, athletics fields and locker rooms. This would suggest that teachers, counselors, administrators, sentries, and bus staff should more responsively monitor language and behavior in hallways, on buses and in the classroom.

Conclusion

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth are often targets of negative and derogatory comments (GLSEN, 2009). The present condition of LGBT students in school settings, as substantiated by the many facts and figures presented in this report, is often marred by hearing homophobic remarks in a variety of settings and conditions. Many instances include verbal and physical harassment and abuse. Up to 90% (GLSEN) of LGBTQ youth reported being harassed in school primarily by other students or in some cases, by staff and teachers.

Because of this harassment, a higher incidence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning students have issues with substance abuse, truancy and even suicide (Boyd, Horn & Whitman 2007). The range of emotions experienced by targeted youth can result in a poor overall school experience, including poor academic performance. As a result, these students may be unable to get into college or higher education (GLSEN). Despite lower reported percentages of school safety in this writer's study, 17%; 72.4% of students who heard homophobic remarks in school felt unsafe (GLSEN).

The majority of support and awareness efforts found by the author were primarily based from LGBT organizations and advocacy groups such as GLSEN. Much of the information and statistics collected were done so using quantitative measures such as surveys. It is the opinion of this writer that qualitative perspective studies may offer deeper and more detailed accounts of LGBT students' perception of school safety. Unfortunately, surveys and other quantitative studies offers something not commonly found in qualitative studies; time. The decision to implement a survey in the author's study was determined to be the most time effective due to the lack of "free" period time students have in school. Despite the drawbacks of facilitating survey it allowed for approximately one third of the student population to take part. An interesting idea

for a follow study would be to collect data from teachers and staff regarding their perceptions of LGBT students' safety.

Although the district in which the writer's study was conducted offers diversity training; specific and detailed resources regarding issues surrounding LGBT youth was not evident. The majority of strategies and interventions suggested in this report are relevant toward advocacy for LGBT youth (such as the implementation of safe spaces, GSAs and trainings); facts about the efficiency of such programs were not readily available. This is specifically true when looking for statistics about the current school climate for LGBT students. Although GLSEN is the primary group that conducts school climate surveys that accommodate LGBT and straight students, several foreign studies were but only two other major studies in the United States (North Carolina and California State Safety Programs). Upon further investigation of these studies, much of the sources and data information originated from GLSEN's efforts.

GLSEN's most recent major study, the 2009 school climate survey; was completed by over 7000 participants. When looking into the sample in more detail, the author found that the sample appeared to be drawn from students who identified themselves as LGBT youth or part of the LGBT community. This raises questions about the validity of the author's study as students did not directly identify as LGBT rather reported being harassed or abused as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Therefore the data could be skewed, resulting in a potentially biased sample.

Students, communities, educators, and policy makers have all been face with a difficult challenge ahead; to keep schools safe for all students. It goes without saying that our society continues to change and face challenges often not commonly found by previous generations. The widespread epidemic of bully over the past twenty has results increased reports

of violence, harassment, abuse and death. As evidenced by the data in the body of this report, anti-gay rhetoric heard in schools can be the catalyst or add fuel to the fire so to speak, than can lead to impaired learning environments for LGBT students. Unfortunately, many students have taken their own lives as a result of the verbal and physical actions of others. Within the school setting, the awareness of LGBT issues and the efforts from all parties involved may be able to benefit from the strategies and interventions proposed in this report. The pejorative use of phrases and terms such as “that’s so gay”, “you’re so gay”, “faggot”, “dyke”, or “queer” occur with alarming frequency and it is the given responsibility that all school personnel have to provide each and every child a safe and equitable learning environment (SSNC, 2006). Although the task may seem insurmountable, school communities around the country can ensure and promote the safety of all students. These measures, with the use of the hypothesized model (See Figure 3 for hypothesized model):

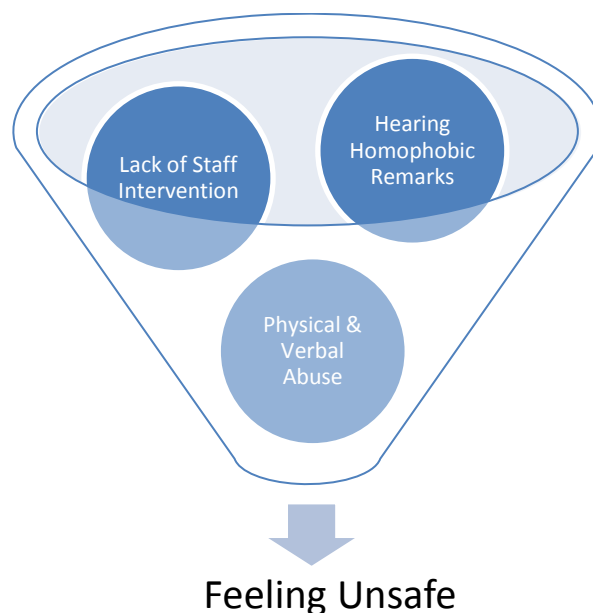


Figure 3

can move us towards a future in which all students have the opportunity to learn and succeed in school, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression (GLSEN, 2009).

References

- Acheson, D. (1998) Great Britain Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health. Available at: <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/doh/ih/ih.htm> Retrieved April 29, 2011.
- Aitkin, S., (2001). Department of Geography, San Diego State University. (2001). *Schoolyard Shootings: Racism, Sexism and Moral Panics over Teen Violence*, 33(4), (pp. 593-600). San Diego, CA: Antipode.
- American Psychological Association (2009, December 15). Witnesses to bullying may face more mental health risks than bullies and victims. Science Daily. Retrieved April 29, 2011, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/12/091214121449.htm>
- Beran, T. (2008). Consequences of being bullied at school. In D. Pepler & W. Craig (Eds.), *Understanding and addressing bullying: An international perspective* (pp. 44-66). Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse.
- Berkman, C. and Zinberg, G. (1997). Homophobia and heterosexism in social workers. *Social Work*, 42, 319-332.
- Birkett, M., Espleage, D., & Koenig, B. (2009, January 15). LGB and Questioning Students in Schools: The Moderating Effects of Homophobic Bullying and School Climate. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 38, 989-1000.
- Blum, R., French, S., Remafedi, G., Resnick, M., & Story, M. (1998, January). The Relationship between Suicide Risk and Sexual Orientation: Results of a. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88(1), 1.
- Brockenbrough, K.K., Cornell, D.G., & Loper, A.B. (2002). Aggressive attitudes among victims of violence at school. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 25, 273-287.

Child Death Review Unit – BC Coroners Service. (2008). *“Looking for something to look forward to...” A five-year retrospective review of child and youth suicide in British Columbia.*

Vancouver, British Columbia.

Cogan, J. C., & Erickson, J. M. (1999). *Lesbians, levis, and lipstick: the meaning of beauty in our lives* (p. 132). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press Inc.

Coloroso, B. (2003). *The bully, the bullied, and the bystander*. New York: Harper-Resource.

Cook, C.R., Williams, K.R., Guerra, N.G., & Kim, T.E. (2010). Variability in the prevalence of bullying and victimization. In S.R. Jimerson, S.M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 347-362). New York: Routledge.

Cook, C.R., Williams, K.R., Guerra, N.G., Kim, T.E., & Sadek, S. (2010). Predictors of bullying and victimization in childhood and adolescence: A meta-analytic investigation. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 25, 65-83.

Community – University Institute for Social Research. (2003). *The Cost of Homophobia: Literature Review on the Human Impact of Homophobia* (p.2-15).

Doll, B., Song, S., Champion, A., & Jones, K. (2011). Classroom ecologies that support or discourage bullying. In D.L. Espelage & S.M. Swearer, (Eds.). *Bullying in North American schools* (2nd edition) (pp. 147-158). NY: Routledge.

D'Augelli, A., & Hersherberger, S. Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth in community settings: Personal challenges and mental health problems. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 21, 421-448.

D'Augelli, A. R., Pilkington, N. W., Hershberger, S. L. (2002). Incidence and mental health impact of sexual orientation victimization of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths in high school. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 17, 148-167.

Due, P., Merlo, J., Harel-Fisch, Y., Damsgaard, M., Holstein, B., Hetland, J., Currie, C., Grabhainn, S., Gaspar de Matos, G., & Lynch, J. (2009). Socioeconomic inequality in exposure to bullying during adolescence: A comparative, cross-sectional, multilevel study in 35 countries. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99, 907-914.

Eslea, M., & Mukhtar, K. (2000). Bullying and racism among Asian schoolchildren in Britain. *Educational Research*, 42, 207-217.

Espelage, D.L., Holt, M.K., & Henkel, R.R. (2003). Examination of peer-group contextual effects on aggression during early adolescence. *Child Development*, 74, 205-220.

Farrington, D. P. (1993). Understanding and preventing bullying. *Crime and Justice*, 17, 381- 458.

Faulkner, A. H., & Cranston, K. (1998). Correlates of same-sex sexual behavior in a random sample of Massachusetts high school students. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88, 262-266.

Fineran, S. (2002) Sexual harassment between same-sex peers: intersection of mental health, homophobia, and sexual violence in schools, *Social Work*, 47(1), 65-74.

Friedman, M. S., Koeske, G. F., Silvestre, A. J., Korr, W. S., & Sites, E. W. (2006). The impact of gender-role nonconforming behavior, bullying, and social support on suicidality among gay male youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38, 621-623.

Fyfe, B. (1983). "Homophobia" or homosexual bias reconsidered. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 12(6), 549-554. Retrieved May 1, 2011, from <http://www.springerlink.com/content/h45h302766248571/>

Garofalo, R., Wolf, R. C., Kessel, S., Palfrey, J. & DuRant, R. H. (1998). The association between health risk behaviors and sexual orientation among a school-based sample of adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 101, 895-902.

Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network. (2009). *The 2009 National School Climate Survey: Executive Summary*. (pp. 1-24). New York, New York: GLSEN

Gibson, P. (1989). Gay male and lesbian youth suicide. *Reports of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide* (DHHS Publication No. AMD 89 – 1623; Vol. 3, pp. 110 – 142). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Glew, G.M., Fan, M., Katon, W., Rivara, F.P., Y Kernic, M.A. (2005). Bullying psychosocial adjustment, and academic performance in elementary school. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, 159, 1026-1031.

Graham, S., (2009). Race and ethnicity in peer relations research. In K. Rubin, W. M. Bukowski & B. Laursen (Eds.), *Handbook of Peer Interactions, Relationships, and Groups* (pp. 394-413). New York: Guilford.

Griffin, P., Lee, c., Waugh, 1., & Beyer, C. (2004). Describing roles that gay-straight alliances play in schools: From individual support to school change. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 1, 7-22.

Harachi, T.W., Fleming, C.B., White, H.R., Ensminger, M.E., Abbott, R.D., Catalano, R.F., & Haggerty, K.P. (2006). Aggressive behavior among girls and boys during middle

childhood: Predictors and sequelae of trajectory group membership. *Aggressive Behavior*, 32, 279-293.

Harris Interactive & GLSEN (2005). *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America, A Survey of Students and Teachers*. New York: GLSEN.

Hawk, P. (2009). *Schools K-12*. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolsk-12.com/Pennsylvania/Philadelphia.index.html>. Retrieved on April 30, 2011

Holt, M., Keyes, M., & Koenig, B. (2011). Teachers' attitudes toward bullying. In D.L. Espelage & S.M. Swearer, (Eds.). *Bullying in North American schools* (2nd edition) (pp. 119-131). NY: Routledge.

Jimerson, S.J., Swearer, S.M., & Espelage, D.L., (2010). *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective*. New York: Routledge.

Kasen, S., Johnson, J.G., Chen, H., Crawford, T.N., & Cohen, P. School climate and change in personality disorder symptom trajectories related to bullying: A prospective study. In D.L. Espelage & S.M. Swearer, (Eds.). *Bullying in North American schools* (2nd edition) (pp. 161-181). NY: Routledge.

Kim, Y. S., & Leventhal, B. (2008, January 17). *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 20(2), 133-154.

Kimmel, M.S. & Mahler, M. (2003) Adolescent masculinity, homophobia, and violence, *American Behavioural Scientist*, 46(10), 1439-1458.

Kumpulainen, K., Rasanen, E., & Puura, K. (2001). Psychiatric disorders and the use of mental health services among children involved in bullying. *Aggressive Behavior*, 27, 102-110.

Kosciw, J. G. (2004). *The 2003 National School Climate Survey: The school-related experiences of our nation's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth*. New York: GLSEN.

Kosciw, J. G., Diaz, E. M., & Greytak, E. A. (2008). *2007 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. New York: GLSEN.

Marshal, M. P., Friedman, M. S., Stall, R., King, K. M., Miles, J., Gold, M. A., Bukstein, O. G., & Morse, J. Q. (2008). Sexual orientation and adolescent substance abuse: A meta-analysis and methodological review. *Addiction, 103*, 546-556.

Mihalik, G.J. (1991). Homosexuality, stigma, and biocultural evolution. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy, 1*, 15-29.

Morrow, K. (1991). Attributions of female adolescent incest victims regarding their molestation. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 15*, 477-493.

Murdock, T. B., & Bolch, M. B. (2005). Risk and protective factors for poor school adjustment in lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) high school youth: Variable and person-centered analyses. *Psychology in the Schools, 42*, 159-172.

Nansel, T.R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R.S., Ruan, W.J., Simmons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behavior among U.S. youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 285*, 2094-2100.

National Institutes of Mental Health (2011). *Teen depression fact sheet*. Retrieved on May 1, 2011 from: <http://www.about-teen-depression.com/teen-depression.html>.

National Threat Assessment Center. (2002). United States Secret Service and United States Department of Education Report: *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School of School Attacks in the United States*. (p. 9), Washington. D.C..

New York State Education Department (2011). Retrieved on October 28, 2011 from: <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/files/2009-10/AOR-2010-261600010000.pdf>

Olweus, D. (1998) *Bullying at school: What we know and what can we do.* (p.9), Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Olweus, D. (2010). *Olweus bullying prevention program.* Retrieved from <http://www.olweus.org/public/bullying.page> on April 27, 2011.

Paul, J.P., Catania, J., Pollack, L., Moskowitz, J., Canchola, J., Mills, T., Binson, D., and Stall, R. (2002). Suicide attempts among gay and bisexual men: Lifetime prevalence and antecedents. *Research and Practice*, 92, 1338-1345.

Pellegrini, A.D., Long, J.D., Solberg, D., Roseth, C., DuPuis, D., Bohn, C., & Hickey, M. (2010). Bullying and social status during school transitions. In S.R. Jimerson, S.M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 199-210). New York: Routledge.

Phoenix, T. L., Hall, W. J., Weiss, M. M., Kemp, J. M., Wells, R. E., & Chan, A. W. (2006). *Homophobic language and verbal harassment in North Carolina high schools.* Chapel Hill, NC: Safe Schools NC.

Poteat, P., Espelage, D. L., & Green, H. (2007). The socialization of dominance: Peer group contextual effects on heterosexist and dominance attitudes. *Journal of Personality and School Psychology*, 18(1), 33-46.

Reis, B. (1996). *Safe Schools Anti-Violence Documentation Project, Third Annual Report.* Seattle: Safe Schools Coalition.

Remafedi, G. (Ed.). (1994). *Death by denial: Studies of suicide in gay and lesbian teenagers.* Boston: Alyson Publications.

Remafedi, G. (1999a). Sexual orientation and youth suicide. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 282, 1291-1292.

Rivers, I. (1996) Young, gay and bullied. *Young People Now*, January 18-19.

Rivers, I. (2000) Social exclusion, absenteeism and sexual minority youth, *Support for Learning*, 15(1), 13-18.

Rivers, I. (2001) The bullying of sexual minorities at school: its nature and long-term correlates, *Educational and Child Psychology*, 18(1), 32-46.

Rivers, I. & D'Augelli, A.R. (2001) The victimization of lesbian, gay and bisexual youths, *Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Identities and Youth: Psychological Perspectives*, 199-223, New York, NY University Press.

Rivers, I., & Noret, N. (2008). Well-being among same-sex- and opposite-sex-attracted youth at school. *School Psychology Review*, 37, 174-187.

Russell, S. T., & Joyner, K. (2001). Adolescent sexual orientation and suicide risk: Evidence from a national study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(8), 1276-1281.

Ryan, C. & Rivers, I. (2003) Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: victimization and its correlates in the USA and UK, *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 5(2), 103-119.

Salmivalli, C., Huttunen, A., & Lagerspetz, K.M.J., (1997). Peer networks and bullying in schools. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 38, 205-312.

SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center. (2003). *Bullying is not a fact of life*. Retrieved April 27, 2001 from www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/SVP-0052.

Scarpaci, R. T. (2006). Bullying: effective strategies for its prevention. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, Summer, 171-174.

Social Exclusion Unit (2000) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. Policy Action Report Summaries: A Compendium*. Available at: http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/published.htm#pub_reports Retrieved April 29, 2011.

Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2008). *Suicide risk and prevention for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

Swearer, S.M., Espelage, D.L., Koenig, B., Berry, B., Collins, A., & Lembeck, P. (in press). A social-ecological model of bullying prevention and intervention in early adolescence. In S.R. Jimerson, A.B. Nickerson, M.J. Mayer, & M.J. Furlong (Eds). *The handbook of school violence and school safety: International research and practice*. NY: Routledge.

Vaughn, M. G., Fu, Q., Bender, K., DeLisi, M., Beaver, K. M., Perron, B. E., & Howard, M. O. (2010). Psychiatric correlates of bullying in the United States: Findings from a national sample. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 81, 183–195.

Vossekuil, B., R. Fern, M. Reddy, R. Borum, and W. Modzeleski. (2002). *The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.

Wells, K., (2007). *Risk and Protective Factors: A Literature Review on the Impact of Homophobia on LGBTQ Youth in Canada*. The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities. University of Alberta, Alberta, Canada. (p.3).

Wells, K., (2009). *Research Brief on Sexual Minority Youth Health, Wellness, and Safety Concerns*. Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Service, University of Alberta, Alberta, Canada. (p. 3)

Whitman, J. S., Horn, S. S., & Boyd, C. J. (2007). Activism in the schools: Providing LGBTQ affirmative training to school counselors. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 11, 143-155.

Appendix

Appendix A

Parental/Guardian Consent

Dear Parent/Guardian:

My name is Joseph Navarra and I am a graduate student pursuing my Master's degree in School Counseling at The College at Brockport, State University of New York. I have been working as a school counselor intern since January 2011 in the School of IIT. As an advocate for students I believe it is important have and understanding of students' perceptions of school climate.

I will have teachers facilitate a climate survey in an effort for staff to ultimately provide additional support. This five minute survey is an initial investigation into the perceptions of bullying and homophobic remarks heard and seen in schools. This will take place during their Career Technical Education classes.

In order for your child to participate in this program, your informed consent is required. You are being asked to make a decision whether or not your child is able to participate in this program. If you want your child to participate in this program, and agree with the statements below, please sign below. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw your child from the program without penalty.

I understand that:

1. My child's participation is voluntary and he/she has the right to refuse to answer any questions. Participating or not participating will have no impact on school evaluations or grades.
2. My child's confidentiality is guaranteed. My name will not be written on the survey. There will be no way to connect me to my written survey. If any publication results from this research, I would not be identified by name. Confidentiality will be protected by the student researcher as part of the survey procedures. All consent forms and documents handed out will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the counseling center.
3. There are no anticipated risks or benefits because of my child's participation in this survey.
4. My child's participation involves reading a written survey of 10 questions and answering those questions in writing. It is estimated that it will take five to seven minutes to complete the survey.
5. All surveys, consent forms and additional documents will be shredded at the end of the project.
6. Should your child have any questions, comments or concerns regarding any portion of the survey, he/she can voluntarily seek counseling from their school counselors (Please see Chennita Gartrell or Allison Atwell). The counselors are located in room 3c7 and are available at all times

during the regular school day by appointment or walk in. If your child has questions outside of school, he/she may seek services from The Center for Youth Services, 905 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, NY 14420, (585-473-2464).

I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my child's participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to allow my child to participate in this survey, realizing I may withdraw without penalty at any time during the process. If you have any questions you may contact:

Primary Researcher: Joseph Navarra (585) 324-9794 jnava1@brockport.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Summer Reiner (585) 395-5497 sreiner@brockport.edu

Site Supervisor: Chennita Gartrell (585) 324-9794 ext. 3372 chennita.gartrell@rcsdk12.org

I understand the information provided in this form and agree that my child take part in the survey.

Name of child _____

Date _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian_____

Appendix B

School Climate Survey

This set of questions is about remarks you may have heard at our school. Please circle the answer that best describes your experience at our school.

1. How often do you hear the expression “That’s so gay,” or “You’re so gay” in school?

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

2. How often have you heard other remarks used in school (such as “faggot,” “dyke,” “queer,” etc.)?

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

3. How often do you hear these remarks from other students?

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

4. Would you say that those remarks are made by:

Most of the students Some of the students A few of the students

5. How often do you hear these remarks from teachers or school staff?

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

6. How often do you hear those remarks in:

a) Classes

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

b) Hallways

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

c) Bathrooms

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

d) Locker Rooms

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

e) Buses

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

f) Athletic Field/Gym

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

g) Schoolyard or School Grounds

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

h) Cafeteria

Frequently Often Sometimes Rarely Never

7. When you hear those remarks, how often has a teacher or other school staff person been present?

Always Most of the time Some of the time Never

8. When those remarks are made and a teacher or other school staff person is present, how often does the teacher or staff person intervene?

Always Most of the time Some of the time Never

9. When you hear those remarks, how often does another student intervene?

Always Most of the time Some of the time Never

10. Have you ever experienced a single or repeated act of emotional, verbal or physical abuse at school? (i.e. hitting, kicking, rumors, unwelcomed language or other actions)

a. Yes No

If yes,

a. How often

Occasionally Often Daily

b. Where did it happen?

Hallway Classroom Cafeteria Bathroom

Outside on school grounds Somewhere else

c. Do you believe you were targeted for any of the following reasons:

Sexual Orientation Gender Race Religion Weight Appearance Other

Appendix C

From: Mark Bartkiewicz
10:23 AM

Sent: Wed 2/16/2011

To: Navarra, Joseph

Cc:

Subject: RE: Bullying Survey

Hi Joe,

Thank you for your interest in GLSEN. Information pertaining to our Local School Climate Survey, a tool to assess school climate, can be found here: <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/1985.html>. On this site you can download the school-based and community-based versions of the survey as well as other related documents, such as a tip sheet.

If you have any other questions, please let me know.

Best regards,

Mark

Mark Bartkiewicz
Research Assistant | GLSEN
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10004
T: 646.388.8053
E: mbartkiewicz@glsen.org
www.glsen.org

From: Navarra, Joseph [mailto:Joseph.Navarra@RCSDK12.ORG]

Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2011 10:13 AM

To: Daryl Presgraves


Subject: Bullying Survey

Hi,

I am a graduate intern in the beginning phases of my thesis. I have a profound interest in school safety and was wondering if your organization would provide me with a bullying survey instrument that you have found effective? I am in the Counselor Education program at The College at Brockport in western New York. Any help in this area would be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much. – Joe Navarra

Appendix D

(<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/educator/index.html>)




[//Giving](#)
[//GLSEN Store](#)
[//Social Media](#)
[DONATE NOW](#)

[ABOUT US](#)
[WHAT WE DO](#)
[RESEARCH](#)
[POLICY](#)
[MEDIA CENTER](#)
[TOOLS & TIPS](#)

EDUCATORS


Here you'll find lesson plans, curricular tools, information on teacher training programs and more. You can also join GLSEN's [Educators Network Mailing List](#). We'll let you know about new educational resources as they become available, including lesson plans and other materials. We'd also love to hear from you about what you like best and use most. [SIGN UP HERE](#)



UNHEARD VOICES, AN LGBT HISTORY RESOURCE

Unheard Voices, an oral history and curriculum project that will help educators integrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) history, people and issues into their instructional programs.


[MORE](#)



BACK-TO-SCHOOL GUIDE FOR CREATING LGBT INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Here are seven ideas for lesson plans and program to kick off the school year.


[MORE](#)



THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO LGBT PRIDE

The Educator's Guide to LGBT Pride will show you five easy ways you can celebrate LGBT Pride in your classroom.

[MORE](#)



DAY OF SILENCE: RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS AND FAMILIES

Materials in this section can assist facilitate dialogue between educators and students, educators and parents as well as students and families.

LOCAL CHAPTERS

Find a GLSEN chapter in your area.

--Select State--

STAY INFORMED

[your email address]

GO

//DONATE

[/REGISTER YOUR GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE \[GSA\]](#)
[/JOIN OUR EDUCATOR NETWORK](#)

Appendix E

<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/booklink/index.html?state=tools&type=educator>

GLSEN®
GAY, LESBIAN & STRAIGHT
EDUCATION NETWORK

//Giving //GLSEN Store //Social Media **DONATE NOW**

ABOUT US WHAT WE DO RESEARCH POLICY MEDIA CENTER TOOLS & TIPS

BOOKLINK

GLSEN's Booklink highlights books of interest to educators. Our latest list is below.

FEATURED BOOKLINKS

- It's Elementary / It's STILL Elementary DVD Set (Video)**
more +
- Mini Mia and Her Darling Uncle**
Mini Mia loves her Uncle Tommy but does not want to share Tommy with his new boyfriend.
more +
- And Baby Makes 4**
How will the young child of a two mom household feel when a new baby is brought home?
more +
- Nothing Pink**
When Vincent's mother discovers a copy of a magazine in Vincent's room that makes the unacknowledged truth blatantly obvious, Vincent's nature and faith collide.
more +
- Boys Don't Knit**
When Marvin accidentally unravels his new sweater, he learns that it's alright for a boy to knit.
more +
- Friends From The Other Side/Amigos Del Otro Lado**
Prietita, a brave young Mexican American girl, defends Joaquin from the neighborhood kids who taunt him with shouts of "mojado" or "wetback."
more +

LOCAL CHAPTERS

Find a GLSEN chapter in your area.

--Select State-- ▾

STAY INFORMED

[your email address] **GO**

//DONATE

**//REGISTER YOUR
GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE [GSA]**

//JOIN OUR EDUCATOR NETWORK

Appendix F

<http://www.thinkb4youspeak.com/ForEducators/GLSEN-EducatorsGuide.pdf>

ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

FOR PARENTS | FOR EDUCATORS | FOR ATHLETIC COACHES

HAVE A VOICE
SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS, SIGN THE PLEDGE

GET INVOLVED
GET INFORMED
SIGN THE PLEDGE
SEND AN E-CARD
DOWNLOAD & SHARE

SHARE

OUR GOAL

0

USED TODAY ON TWITTER
"FAG"

"DYKE"

"...SO GAY"

Visit [Changing the Game: The GLSEN Sports Project](#)

DOWNLOAD AND SHARE

44.1% OF LGBT STUDENTS REP BEING PHYSICALLY HARASSED AT SCHOOL

GLSEN

AD BANNERS, BLOG MODULE, SLUR COUNTER AND MORE.
[CLICK HERE TO VIEW ALL](#)

facebook
BECOME A 'FAN' OF GLSEN

Follow GLSEN ON TWITTER

WORDS HAVE CONSEQUENCES
KNOW THE EFFECTS OF VERBAL BULLYING

A MOTHER'S PLEA

A LITTLE STAR POWER NEVER HURT.
CHECK OUT THESE PSAs

HILARY DUFF
VIEW PSA

Appendix G

<http://www.dayofsilence.org/>

GLSEN

DAY of SILENCE® - APRIL 20, 2012

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO END THE SILENCE?



GETInvolved
REGISTER

HOME
GET READY
GET INFO
GET STUFF
| Contact

GET CONNECTED!









On the National Day of Silence hundreds of thousands of students nationwide take a vow of silence to bring attention to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in their schools.



GET SIRIUS!
What does a Day of Silence sound like on radio?

GET READY!
Get DOS planning ideas or download the **Organizing Manual**

GET ORGANIZED!
Register your DOS event **now** and get **FREE** products.

GET CONNECTED!
Join the communities on **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **MySpace**

BLOGGING THE SILENCE ([Go to the BLOG...](#))

Why I'm an Ally

Ally Week Approaches! October 17-21

Appendix H

<http://www.allyweek.org/>



ALLY week

october 17-21, 2011



Sign Up

Register your student event, get free resources and be counted.

More

- About Ally Week (FAQs)
- Take Action
- Get Stuff
- Educators

CHANGE ATTITUDES. CHANGE BEHAVIORS. CHANGE DIRECTIONS. CHANGE LIVES. CHANGE POLICIES. CHANGE VOICES. BE AN ALLY. BE THE CHANGE.

Ally Stories

"I decided to step up and take a stand and be honest and real with my friends."

[more »](#)

Take the Ally Pledge

Help to end anti-LGBT bullying and harassment.



Allies play a vital role in making schools safer for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. In fact, the first Gay-Straight Alliance was the idea of a straight ally.

Students created Ally Week as a way to build upon the unifying work GSAs do across the country by encouraging people to be allies against anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools. Whether you belong to a GSA or not, Ally Week is the perfect time for you and your friends to sign the Ally Pledge.



ALLY WEEK on FaceBook

Appendix I

<http://www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/resources/index.html>

NO name-calling week

JAN 23-27, 2012

[updates](#) • [about](#) • [register](#)
[order kit](#) • [partners](#)

be a fan!

RESOURCES

Are you thinking of getting a No Name-Calling Week off the ground in your school, but you aren't sure where to start? Well, you're in the right place - below you will find many useful items that can help you plan, promote, and carry out many different kinds of anti-bullying events and activities.

Whether you are a teacher, student, administrator, counselor, or parent, there are materials here for you, and the best thing is that they're all FREE!

NNCW Planning and Bullying Resources

Useful for planning, implementing, or assessing a NNCW in your school, including a student survey and a sample letter to principals

Elementary Level Lesson Plans

Five lesson plans for use with students in Grades K-4, co-produced with the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Middle Level Lesson Plans

11 lesson plans for use with students in Grades 5-8, from the original No Name-Calling Week Kit

High School Lesson Plans

This lesson is designed to help draw high school students' attention to anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (anti-LGBT) bullying, name-calling and harassment.

CONTACT INFO

- KIT:** For questions about ordering the kit, please contact Elizabeth Free - call 646-388-6576 or email: efree@qlsen.org.
- Tell us about your school's plans for No Name-Calling Week:** [CLICK HERE](#)

General Information:
info@nonamecallingweek.org
 Justin Rosado - 646-388-6595

Contact (Media Inquiries Only):
 Daryl Presgraves
 Media Relations
 646-388-6577
press@nonamecallingweek.org